

Hafa Adai!

Transitional parole for CNMI LTR applicants extended. **PAGE 3**  
Former Zoning board chair Blanco passes away. **PAGE 4**

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# Saipan Tribune

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**FRIDAY** DECEMBER 10, 2021  
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## Task force member killed in UTV crash

### Let's show our Christmas spirit in our villages

**TOGETHER, WE CAN**

By **DIANN TORRES**  
Special to the Saipan Tribune



This year, the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors established the Marianas Village Pride Christmas Decorating Contest to promote beautification in the villages. This is the perfect opportunity for schools, residents, businesses, and village residents to bring the festivities into their villages, homes, and schools while improving our islands.

Story on **Page 11**

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
[kimberly\\_esmores@saipantribune.com](mailto:kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

A fatal car crash near the Mariana Resort quarantine facility in Marpi claimed the life of a COVID-19 Task Force member early Thursday morning. See **TASK** on **Page 4**

### Star Marianas resumes interisland travel

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

Star Marianas Airlines Inc. has resumed air service for the islands of Tinian and Rota on a charter basis following Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' issuance of a state of emergency.

This comes even as the

emergency transport of medical referral patients from Tinian and Rota starts today, Dec. 10, via chartered flights with Micronesian Air.

Starting yesterday, Star Marianas Air returned to operation, providing organized charters among the three islands. See **TRAVEL** on **Page 4**

### 'PUSH' CEREMONY

A U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules assigned to the 36th Airlift Squadron, sits in a hangar during the Operation Christmas Drop "Push" Ceremony at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam last Dec. 6, 2021. Over the course of 10 days, crews will airdrop donated food, supplies, educational materials, and tools to 55 islanders throughout the Southeastern Pacific, including the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau. The weeklong international effort allows Pacific Air Forces airmen to work with partner nations to execute low-cost, low-altitude air drops.

U.S. AIR FORCE/SSG DIVINE COX

### COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

#### LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

**15 DAYS**  
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

### AT A GLANCE

As of 6:22pm, Dec. 9, 2021

#### VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **90%**  
Fully Vaccinated:

Days since last community transmission **3**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	<b>35,143</b>
Fully Vaccinated:	<b>32,256</b>
Moderna	
Initiated:	<b>5,202</b>
Fully Vaccinated:	<b>4,801</b>
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	<b>1,084</b>

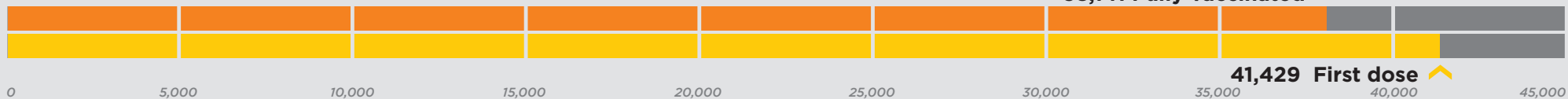
GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	<b>19,287</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19,300</b>
Recovered	<b>18,751</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18,752</b>
Active	<b>268</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>281</b>
Deaths	<b>267</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>267</b>

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	<b>1,182</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,182</b>
Traced via Travel Screening	<b>267</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>267</b>
Traced via Community Screening	<b>915</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>915</b>
Deaths	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

### CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

38,141 Fully vaccinated



### INSIDE

#### BUSINESS

Federal officials have authorized a new COVID-19 antibody drug for people with health problems.

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#### NATION

The number of Americans fully vaccinated against COVID-19 reached 200 million Wednesday.

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#### ASIA

Outrage spreads on social media in Myanmar over accounts of the alleged killing of 11 villagers.

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## Local

## Babauta cautions Torres

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta has cautioned Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres that if he does not appear before the committee as directed, they will take appropriate measures, to include finding him in legislative contempt.

"This is not a threat but a cautionary notice to the governor, and all other individuals who are subject to our lawful subpoena power," said Babauta in a letter Wednesday to the Office of the Governor's legal counsel, Gilbert J. Birnrich.

This comes soon after Birnrich objected to the testimonial subpoena issued to Torres by the JGO. He cited three grounds in objecting to the subpoena.

First, he said, the governor, as head of the Executive Branch of government, is immune from compulsory testimony before an arm of the Legislative Branch, and such testimony is protected by executive privilege.

Second, he said, the subpoena does not further a constitutionally cognizable and legitimate legislative purpose.

Finally, the subpoena was not issued in accordance with CNMI law or House rules, he said.

"As an initial matter, we are not aware of any instance in the history of the United States that a legislative body on the federal or state level has compelled the testimony of the head of the Executive

**» Torres' counsel says he is not aware of instance in US history where an Executive Branch chief is compelled to testify at an oversight hearing**

Branch for an oversight investigation," he said.

Birnrich requested Babauta or a designee to confer with him via telephone today, Friday, at 8:30am.

The Democrat-controlled JGO Committee is investigating the governor's expenditures of public funds and travels. Torres is the titular head of the NMI Republican Party.

Torres and Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert Alepuyo Deleon Guerrero have been summoned to testify before the JGO today.

Babauta agreed to Birnrich's request to confer with the JGO Committee today at 9:30am, at the House chamber, where they will listen to his position "in good faith."

However, this does not in any way excuse anyone from compliance with any subpoena, Babauta said in her letter to Birnrich. She said they fully expect all subpoenaed individuals such as Torres to appear as directed.

Babauta said at this time they will be preparing to conduct a JGO hearing today at 10:30am.

For months, she said, Torres has been longing for an oppor-

See **BABAUTA** on Page 4



Babauta



Birnrich

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## Transitional parole for CNMI LTR applicants extended

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced yesterday that it will automatically extend parole and employment authorization, if applicable, for parolees who timely applied for Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands long-term resident status.

This specific extension of parole applies only to current parolees who timely filed Form I-955, Application for CNMI Long-Term Resident Status, and Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, and whose applications remain pending on Dec. 30, 2021.

USCIS will automatically extend their parole (and employment authorization, if applicable) without interruption through June 30, 2022, or the date that we make a

final decision on their Form I-955 and Form I-765, whichever is earlier.

For eligible parolees whose timely filed Form I-955 and Form I-765 remain pending on Dec. 30, 2021, the following documentation will serve as evidence of identity and work authorization for purposes of Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, until June 30, 2022 (or the date that we make a final decision on their long-term resident status application, whichever is earlier):

- A copy of this Web alert;
- Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document, bearing category code "C-11" with an expiration date on or before June 29, 2020; and

- Evidence that they filed Form I-955 and Form I-765

on or before Aug. 17, 2020. This may be a copy of Form I-797C, Notice of Action, reflecting that they have filed Form I-765 requesting the classification code of (c)(37), or if unavailable, a copy of their Form I-955 and Form I-765 with a mail receipt.

The CNMI long-term resident status was created by the Northern Mariana Islands Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act (Public Law 116-24), signed into law on June 25, 2019. The law specifically gave the Department of Homeland Security the discretion to authorize pa-

role, with work authorization, for these individuals during the time period needed to implement the new law. USCIS previously extended this parole four times, on June 17, 2020, Aug. 11, 2020, Dec. 30, 2020, and June 16, 2021.

Eligible individuals had 180 days, until Aug. 17, 2020, to apply for CNMI long-term resident status. USCIS announced the Aug. 17 deadline

when it opened the application period on Feb. 19, 2020. If USCIS denies a parolee's Form I-955 and Form I-765,

their parole (and employment authorization, if applicable) will end and they must depart the CNMI. (PR)

## HANMI occupancy at 35% in Nov.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported a 35% average occupancy rate among its 12 member-hotels in November. This is over eight times higher compared to November 2020, with 14,511 room nights sold this November compared to 2,006 rooms last November.

The occupancy rates do not include venue rentals at Kanoa Resort Saipan for government COVID-19 quarantine accommodations.

"November occupancy rates were very similar to the prior month, with growing demand among visitors for the Marianas, but a limited number of quarantine rooms to accommodate them," said HANMI chairwoman Gloria Cavanagh. "The government lifted the hybrid quarantine requirements starting Dec. 1. This opens up our islands to a free market. Those tourists that already booked on TRIP—the Tourism Resumption Investment Plan—program will still receive benefits of lodging coupons to be used in any

hotel approved by the Marianas Visitors Authority under the World Travel & Tourism Council safe travel guidelines. The demand through the end of the year is still very strong. We anticipate more flights to be starting at the beginning of the year after the conclusion of the TRIP program. Strong COVID-19 protocols and our collective cooperation with those protocols will continue to be key to the continued recovery of our tourism economy."

A total of 14,511 of 41,213 available room nights sold during the month. Average room rates were \$135.59 compared to \$144.40 last October.

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kanoa Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Saipan World Resort, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

HANMI was established in 1985. (PR)

## 'Remain cautious while waiting for your COVID-19 test results'

One must take all necessary safety precautions while waiting for one's COVID-19 test results, according to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña.

"...The number [of positive cases of COVID-19] is increasing ...and...what really worries me is when individuals get tested, [go out], and don't even know that they're [positive or negative]," said Muña on Wednesday.

She acknowledges that CHCC has been processing many COVID-19 tests of late and that releasing results takes time, but as a precautionary measure, she advised people who have recently gotten tested to do their part in curbing

COVID-19 spread and to "act as if you're positive."

"We want to stop the spread. ...Don't just go and get tested; get tested and act as if you're positive so that you don't go spreading it to other people. What's happening is totally opposite. People get tested, and then they go out and hang out with family members, and more and more people are identified," she said.

Muña also affirmed that home quarantine continues to be looked at as an option for COVID-positive individuals in other places globally. In the CNMI, the recent rise in cases and other factors are being taken into consideration. "Is it time to adjust? Maybe", she said. (Joshua Santos)

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# Former Zoning board chair Blanco passes away

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

Former CNMI Zoning board chair

Diego C. Blanco passed away yesterday morning at his residence in As Lito of still unknown cause. He was 70.

Last July 23, Diego Blanco's son, Rep. Ivan Alafonso Blanco, passed away of natural causes.

John Blanco, who is business manager and athletic di-



Blanco

rector at Mt. Carmel School, said in a phone interview last night that a grandson found his older brother, Diego, lying motionless.

He said Diego Blanco was then transported by an ambulance to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., where he was pronounced dead.

He said they are awaiting reports from the Department of Public Safety and CHCC as to the cause of death.

John Blanco said they have no

schedule yet as to funeral services.

He said Diego Blanco had eight children and nine siblings.

"He speaks his mind but we get along very well. I've always had a deep connection with my brother. He has similarities to my Dad," John Blanco said.

Diego Blanco was elected Zoning board chair six times since he was first appointed to the board in 2012. In February 2019, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios accepted his courtesy resignation.

## IPI wants Kan Pacific suit dismissed for failure to state a claim

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International LLC has asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to dismiss the lawsuit filed by Kan Pacific Saipan against it for failure to state a claim.

Last Monday, Joey San Nicolas, counsel to IPI, filed an answer to Kan Pacific's October 2021 complaint stating that the plaintiff's lawsuit should be dismissed with prejudice because it failed to state a claim against IPI or create a genuine issue of fact upon which relief may be granted.

In addition, San Nicolas said, Kan Pacific's claims may be barred in whole or in part by the applicable statute of limitations.

"Plaintiff's claims may be barred in whole or in part by release, waiver, estoppel, impossibility, impracticability, ambiguity, immunity granted by the operation of law, and/or by the doctrine of laches," he said.

In the initial complaint, Joseph Iacopino, who represents Kan Pacific, argues that the case is about a

breach of a written agreement signed by Kan Pacific and IPI on or about May 9, 2016.

Iacopino said that prior to entering into the agreement, several disputes and potential causes of action developed between plaintiff and IPI that exposed each party to the potential for an adverse judgment, attorney's fees, costs, expenditure of time and resources and other adverse consequences.

"Subsequent to substantial negotiations, the subject written agreement was entered into between Kan Pacific and IPI to incentivize and compensate Kan Pacific for the closure of Kan Pacific's business operations prior to the termination of its lease agreement, and to resolve such disputes and potential causes of action, avert the potential of such an adverse judgment, avoid the need to incur attorney fees, costs, expenditure of valuable time and resources and other adverse consequences and for other good and valuable consideration," Iacopino said.

As a material part of the consideration for entering into the agreement, Iacopino said, IPI became contractu-

ally and legally bound and obligated to pay to Kan Pacific the sum of \$5 million which was to be satisfied by making 25 annual payments to Kan Pacific in the amount of \$200,000 on June 1 of each calendar year commencing on June 1, 2017.

Relying on this, he said, Kan Pacific refrained from pursuing legal action against IPI and others and otherwise changed its position and circumstances.

IPI thereafter made the first three annual payments in June 2017, June 2018 and June 2019.

However, IPI allegedly failed and refused to tender any portion of the amount that became due and owing on June 1, 2020. Kan Pacific sent IPI more than 10 days' notice of such default, and IPI has refused to pay, including the annual payment that became due and owing on June 1, 2021.

Kan Pacific is demanding a jury trial and has asked the court to rule in favor of Kan Pacific and issue a judgment against the defendants.

The lawsuit also asked that award of damages be issued in favor of Kan Pacific and attorney's fees and costs.

## Pharmacy set up at ACS for quick access to needed meds

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**  
joshua\_santos@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A pharmacy has been set up at the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.'s Alternate Care Site at Kanoa Resort Saipan to ensure the timely delivery of medication needed by patients at the site. The on-site pharmacy is also responsible for processing and preparing courses of REGEN-COV monoclonal antibody treatment at the site.

In an interview Wednesday with pharmacy manager Rodylyn Bacani, she said the main goal of the on-site pharmacy is to ensure the efficient preparation of daily medications and COVID-19 therapeutics needed by patients.

"We prepare the daily medications

of the admitted patients...and even prepare REGEN-COV for easy facilitation of processing, ordering, and preparation of medication. So when there's a patient needing REGEN-COV or any other COVID therapeutics, it's here, it's being prepared

## Rip currents seen until Sunday night

The public is being warned of dangerous rip currents along east facing reefs of the Marianas through Sunday night.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center's State Warning Point, there is a high risk of rip currents through late Sunday night on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Rip currents can sweep even the

efficiently so that the patient will not have to wait," she said.

Bacani added that the on-site pharmacy coordinates with the outpatient and inpatient pharmacies at CHCC's hospital so that required medications are processed and delivered quickly.

## Rip currents seen until Sunday night

best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Precautionary/preparedness actions...

The CNMI Emergency Operations Center is reminding the public to avoid venturing out toward east facing reefs. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, swim in a direction following the shoreline until you are out of the current, then head in to shore. (PR)

and to compromise with all witnesses summoned before the committee.

While agreeing to meet the governor's counsel in person at the House chamber today, she advised Birnrich that the objection that he raised in his letter has been reviewed by the House legal counsel and that the committee has determined that the points raised in the letters are without legal merit.

Babauta said Torres does not have

immunity such that he can avoid the legislative subpoena.

She said there is a legislative purpose to their hearings.

She said there is ample authority supported by the House Rules, CNMI statutes, and the CNMI Constitution to issue their subpoenas and hold anyone, including Torres, in contempt, if, and when, there is a failure to comply with their subpoena.

Torres had responded to some

## TRAVEL

From Page 1

In a short statement from Star Marianas president Shaun Christian, he explained that the state of emergency Torres issued late Wednesday evening left Star Marianas under the impression that all Commonwealth Ports Authority's imposed fees have been suspended. This was their main condition to CPA for them to resume interisland travel.

From here, Christian said, they are just waiting for the go-signal from the U.S. Department of Transportation to allow them to resume regular flight service.

"We were made aware last night that the governor issued a state of emergency, so we resumed charter flights. Upon receiving permission to resume from the U.S. Department of Transportation, we plan to start scheduled service again. We are under the impression that the governor's state of emergency addresses the fee suspension. We aren't able to speak to the specifics of the state of emergency, but that was our impression in reading it," he said.

CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said that CPA is working on a long-term fix so that a situation like this, where all interisland travel ceases due to a dispute, does not happen again.

"This situation will keep reoccurring if you have a monopoly that can unilaterally decide when to start and stop services without notice. The

long-term fix is subsidizing inter-island routes. And that why we've asked the federal government for EAS designation," she said.

Meanwhile, as a result of the ongoing dispute and uncertainty of when daily flights will resume for the islands of Tinian and Rota, the Governor's Office, in consultation with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Tinian Health Center, Rota Health Center, the Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan, and the Office of the Mayor of Rota have identified an air carrier service, Micronesia Aviation Systems, Inc. dba Micronesia Air, to prioritize the transport of medical referral patients from Tinian and Rota beginning today, Dec. 10, via chartered flights.

Non-medical referral patients may be accommodated subject to seat availability on a first-come, first-serve basis. Non-medical referral passengers will be allowed one luggage up to 30 lbs. Any excess cargo will be subject to space availability on the aircraft.

A valid photo identification is required and must be submitted upon confirmation of chartered flight arrangements.

Non-medical referral passengers interested in this service must call (670) 783-4455 or (670) 285-0196 for further information; however, essential travel will be prioritized.

Micronesia Air will be available on a chartered basis until such time daily flights resume.

## TASK

From Page 1

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Adrian Pangelinan confirmed that a fatal crash claimed the life of a female task force member who worked at the quarantine site. The two other passengers in the Utility Task Vehicle with her survived.

According to police reports, the operator of the vehicle was driving at a high rate of speed before all three of them were ejected from the vehicle. Police noted that there were beer cans scattered in the area of the accident and it is believed to have been from the vehicle.

The accident currently remains under investigation.

In a statement yesterday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres extended his condolences to the family of the deceased. "It is never easy to announce the passing of a community member, but I ask our Commonwealth to pray for the family of a member of our COVID-19 Task Force during this difficult time. The Department of Public Safety is currently conducting its investigation and remains in open communication with the COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. We extend our deepest heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of the deceased, and I ask the community to respect

the privacy of the family at this time," he said.

Torres encourages the public to continue to support the COVID-19 Task Force as many of its officers experience physical and mental strain on a day-to-day basis.

"This pandemic has placed a physical and mental strain on all of us, most especially on our first responders and our healthcare workers. Let us continue to support our COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC in their work by doing our part to protect each other through extra precautions. We must continue to encourage vaccinations and boosters, while also practicing the 3Ws to limit the spread of COVID-19," Torres said.

According to a DPS press release, the accident occurred on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, at about 2:27am. When officers were dispatched to the scene, they noticed a UTV vehicle resting on its side with an unresponsive individual lying nearby. Several items were scattered throughout the area, including beer cans.

It was found that the driver was driving at a high rate of speed before she and her two occupants were ejected from the vehicle. Both passengers managed to get up and run toward the former Mariana Resort & Spa to call for police assistance.

Medics arrived on the scene and transported the driver to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp, where she was pronounced dead at 3:14am.

## BABAUTA

From Page 2

tunity to provide answers to the JGO inquiries. "We are providing him the opportunity to address the JGO Committee directly. Now is the time to show everyone that he truly has nothing to hide," she said.

Babauta said the JGO has made every effort to be accommodating

of the JGO allegations in interviews with KKMP radio's Gary Sword. He said he has decided to end the JGO "political show" by addressing the allegations. He said

he decided on having the video interview after the JGO failed to respond to his letter to Babauta last Nov. 8, requesting for questions in writing.



# MCS Theater Club's *The Sound of Music* is still a go

Inspired by the show business adage, "The show must go on," Mount Carmel School's Theatre Club is safely proceeding with rehearsals and new performance dates for *The Sound of Music*, which will now be presented on Jan. 26 and 28, 2022.

Originally slated for Dec. 3 and 4, the show had to be postponed due to the recent rise in community transmission of COVID-19, which led to a temporary suspension of extra-curricular activities at the school.

Show director and club adviser Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero also announced that, with the exception of one run-through, rehearsals would be avoided throughout December. "We have done this so that we can allow the public health situation to improve, we can avoid conflicting with student exams and important family and community events, and we can give students much needed rest to take care of their mental health," said Deleon Guerrero.

When rehearsals resume, the club will implement additional safety precautions to help prevent and protect

against the spread of COVID-19. Per school policy, all cast and crew members must provide the school office with proof of vaccination. The club will also secure face shields for all cast members so that they may safely sing and recite lines without the impediment of a face mask. In addition, to ensure adequate air ventilation in a setting that helps prevent the spread of the airborne coronavirus, all large-group rehearsals will be relocated to the school's cafeteria. The club also announced that it will continue to follow and enforce COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including but not limited to, temperature checks, logging for contact tracing purposes, physical distancing, and face masks/shields.

In addition to being directed by Deleon Guerrero, the show will feature live music from Mount Carmel School's Concert Band conducted by Julian Greening and vocal direction by Jener Pineda and Anna Rose Deleon Guerrero. Earning five Tony Awards and five Oscars, *The Sound of Music* was the final collaboration

between the theatrical powerhouse duo, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. The story is based on the memoir of Maria Augusta Trapp and follows an ebullient postulate who serves as governess to the seven children of the imperious Captain von Trapp, bringing music and joy to the household. But as the forces of Nazism take hold of Austria, Maria and the entire von Trapp family must make a moral decision.

Launched in 1996, the MCS Theatre Club celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, commemorating over 50 theatrical and cinematic productions, including several Disney musicals, numerous Shakespeare plays, and a number of original productions. The club started this year's celebration in February with the sold-out premiere of the latest entry in its award-winning *We Drank Our Tears* series, the "Stories of Visitation, Henry, and Dave" at American Memorial Park. The club continued the celebration in April with William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and in May with the feature film *Zero2Hero*, a follow-up to 2011's cult hit, *Zero to Hero*. *The Sound of Music*

will conclude the club's year-long celebration.

*The Sound of Music*, with music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, as suggested by *The Trapp Family Singers* by Maria Augusta Trapp, is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com) *The Sound of Music* will be presented at Saipan World Resort on Jan. 26 and 28, 2022, with doors opening at 6:30pm. Tickets are \$25 for front row

premium seats, \$10 for preferred seating, and \$5 for general admission. Tickets can be purchased at the school's Business Office. To comply with COVID-19 Mitigation Guidelines, tickets are limited and are available only on a first-come, first-served basis.

The production is made possible by support from the CNMI Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and the CNMI Council for Arts and Culture with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information, call 234-6184 or visit [www.mountcarmelsaipan.com](http://www.mountcarmelsaipan.com). (PR)

## 'Monoclonal antibody treatment is not a COVID vaccine substitute'

By JOSHUA SANTOS  
joshua\_santos@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

REGEN-COV monoclonal antibody treatment is not a substitute for getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and mostly applies to COVID-positive individuals who are at risk of experiencing severe COVID-19.

This was emphasized during a news briefing with the CNMI's media partners last Wednesday, with David Fifer, group supervisor for the National Disaster Medical System, saying "there's a particular person who's a candidate for this treatment."

That would be people who are COVID-positive, symptomatic, with underlying health conditions, and are at high risk of progressing to severe COVID-19.

"There's sometimes a misperception out there that you don't have to worry about getting vaccinated because if you get sick you'll just get the monoclonal, and that's not really true," said Fifer. "People really need to be vaccinated, and [REGEN-COV treatment is] sort of a backup plan if you are vaccinated and still get sick, but it's really only for people who have things like underlying health conditions, which would put them at higher risk of a more severe illness."

Fifer is part of a team of federal health care partners that recently arrived on Saipan to aid the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. with administering monoclonal antibody treatment and vaccination operations.

This team includes Fifer, Wisconsin-1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team commander Lisa Hass-Peters, nurses, physicians, and a paramedic.

Hass-Peters said that monoclonal antibody treatment is a four-dose regimen of subcutaneous injections that can be completed simultaneously. After a brief monitoring period with no reported issues, individuals are cleared to be returned to the isolation site they came from, she said.

A subcutaneous injection is an injection into the layer of skin directly below the dermis and epidermis.

Fifer added that the shots may be administered as one shot in each arm with two shots administered on different parts of the stomach. He said the procedure is quick, the needles used are small, and that those who have received the shots "find it a lot less intense than they were anticipating."

In the short time since his and other federal partners' arrival on Saipan, Fifer said the team has administered 15 courses of monoclonal antibody treatment. CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña said that over 130 courses in total have been administered so far.

As for stock, Muña said CHCC had under 300 courses as of Wednesday but 500 more are incoming.

Regarding the storage of REGEN-COV, Hass-Peters and Muña said that, unlike certain COVID-19 vaccines, the vials are easier to store and do not require storage at sub-zero temperatures.



### CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER BUFFET Friday, December 24 | 5:30PM—9:00PM

Featuring individually served Kevin's Ribeye Steak w/ sides, Seafood on ice, Sushi & Sashimi, Desserts, Drinks and more!

### CHRISTMAS DAY BRUNCH Saturday, December 25 | 10:30AM—2:00PM

Featuring Herb Crusted Roast Lamb Rack, Slowly Roasted Turkey, Homemade Smoked Ham, Seafood on ice, Sushi & Sashimi, Delectable desserts, Drinks and more!

### CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER BUFFET Saturday, December 25 | 5:30PM—9:00PM

Featuring individually served Kevin's Ribeye Steak w/ sides, Seafood on ice, Sushi & Sashimi, Desserts, Drinks and more!

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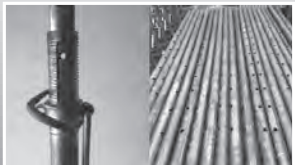
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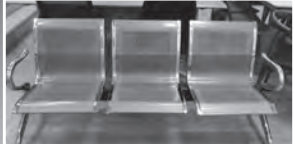
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## HUD OKs NMHC's Alternative Green Building Standards

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. announced yesterday that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently approved the CNMI's Alternative Green Building Standards.

In a news release announcing the decision, it said that a customized Green Building Standard for new construction and rehabilitation projects in the CNMI is justified, based on its unique climate and housing needs.

"Our remote location poses several challenges, both in obtaining certified Green materials and equipment, and in procuring the services of accredited consultants necessary to conform with one of the 'National' standards that HUD prefers," it said.

"In addition to the challeng-

es related to procuring a certification, our tropical climate negates the need for most space conditioning. Our standard new construction homes are sold without any HVAC [heating, ventilation and air conditioning] equipment for heating or cooling. This means that there is no need for insulation and air sealing of the building envelope. With regard to the building envelope, it is important to note that we have long-held standards related to resiliency, perhaps the most important Green standard for our location. Our structures are concrete, including the roof assembly," it added.

In an email dated Nov. 19, 2021, HUD assistant director for Disaster Recovery and Special Issues Division notified NMHC corporate direc-

tor Jesse S. Palacios to "accept the former's email for NMHC's records as approval from HUD of the CNMI's Alternative Green Building Standards that were received from NMHC on Aug. 30, 2021."

The HUD assistant director further wrote that, "as a provision of the approval, HUD is requesting that NMHC's policies and procedures be modified to include Energy Star appliances for single-family housing activities when available and can be reasonably procured."

"This is indeed welcome and exciting news in that our CDBG-DR Housing and Public Infrastructure (e.g., repairs/reconstruction of public facilities) projects can now move forward with the approval of this HUD requirement—HUD Green Building Standards,"

said Palacios. "To facilitate and expedite these CDBG-DR projects, I have asked our CDBG-DR program manager to finalize the Green Building Standards and checklist and the CDBG-DR housing administrator and CDBG-DR project manager to begin calling in approved borrowers and contractors to revise previous NMHC approved house plans and project worksheets, respectively,

to incorporate these alternate green building standards."

80 FR 25901 and 24 CFR §§ 92.251 and 905.312 (b) require CDBG-DR projects and developments to comply with the IBC, local codes, and HUD requirements, which include Green Building Standards.

NMHC wants to thank the public, particularly its clientele—both approved borrowers and contractors—for their continued patience and understanding. (PR/Saipan Tribune)

## 2 establishments shut down following burglary

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
kimberly\_esmores@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Two local establishments along Middle Road were burglarized early Wednesday, causing the establishments to close temporarily so they could check the items that were stolen and how much was lost as a result of the break-in.

Sherwin Williams and Safety First, two establishments along Middle Road in Gualo Rai that are believed to have the same owner, were burglarized early Wednesday and were temporarily closed until they are able to return the store to normal.

"There was a burglary that happened early [Wednesday] morning and we are working with the authorities to hopefully identify who was responsible. At the moment, our stores are closed temporarily as we do our inventory and sort out all the mess," according to one of the employees of Safety First.

It is believed the break-ins happened late Tuesday evening up until early Wednesday morning.

When asked what was

stolen, the employees said they're not certain yet as they continue to do their inventory.

"We believe it started sometime late in the evening and ended sometimes early in the morning. The burglary was all over but it's best that the authorities finish the investigation before we release any details or information. How much was stolen is still being looked into. We're still calculating all the numbers so we don't have an exact figure at the moment," he said.

Because of the extensive inventory that needed to be done and because of the mess that was left behind as a result of the burglary, both establishments had to close temporarily.

In a short statement from Department of Public Safety spokesperson Adrian Pangelinan, he confirmed the burglary but there wasn't much information to be shared as of press time as it remains under investigation.

"[DPS investigators] are working on it at this time. Once they get more info on the investigation they will let me know," he said.

Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc., (Mobil) is a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil Corporation – one of the world's largest publicly traded international oil and gas company, which holds an industry-leading inventory of resources and is one of the world's largest integrated refiners, marketers of petroleum products and chemical manufacturers. This is your opportunity to join this dynamic company and become part of the team that thrives in a fast-paced, controls-oriented environment as:

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- Provide technical support for facility design, maintenance and repair activities as required at the facilities assigned to the Engineer.
- Develop and ensure adherence to Safety, Security, Health & Environment (SSH&E) programs to safeguard the safety and health of the community, the public and employees.
- Ensure adherence to company processes in procurement, work controls and environmental protection to help improve efficiencies in project management.
- Interface with Engineering Manager, Safety, Engineering and Technical Advisor, Aviation Operations Manager, Safety Advisors, Contractors, Depot personnel, Environmental and Government representative as required.
- Maintain updated engineering projects on Global Engineering Database.
- Able to support affiliated Mobil facilities in Upper Pacific Islands per assigned for project work, meeting, etc., including (Cabras, Saipan, Rota, Tinian, Majuro) where some travel may be required
- Other work tasks per assigned

### Qualifications:

- A Bachelor of Engineering degree (Mechanical, Electrical, Civil, or related engineering discipline desirable)
- Preferred minimum three years' experience of project engineering and construction management, however, less experienced or graduate engineers will also be considered
- Basic knowledge and understanding of Safety, Security, Health, and Environment (SSH&E) management principles
- Proficiency with computer applications in spreadsheet, word processing, project scheduling and planning materials specifications and construction drawings
- Understanding of US federal and local regulations as applied to project construction activities
- Ability to pro-actively assess operational issues and develop options for solution
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing

Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience in tank repair and construction and with knowledge and background in petroleum industry.

Remuneration will be commensurate with the successful applicant's relevant skills and experience.

**If you are interested in and/or meet the qualifications for this position, please submit your resume on or before December 31, 2021 to the following:**

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## NOTICE OF ISSUANCE OF A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE

### ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

#### PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

CNMI Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, on December 1, 2021, approved and issued *Qualifying Certificate No. QC 2021-01 for Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC* ("the Beneficiary").

**Address:** The Address of the Beneficiary is *Marina Heights Business Park, Puerto Rico, Municipality of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands 96950.*

**Investment:** The Beneficiary will invest approximately \$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export, and eco-tourism, in the municipality of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands 96950

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan  
Executive Director

*Pursuant to Qualifying Certificate Rules & Regulations, this ad is paid by the Beneficiary*



## \$3.4M additional stimulus out

The Department of Finance announced yesterday the distribution of 2,131 stimulus checks, or additional Third Economic Impact Payments, amounting to \$3,435,937.50.

This batch consists of additional \$1,400 payments due to taxpayers based on a 2020 income tax return or amendment. Initially, third stimulus checks were based on the 2019 income tax return, thus taxpayers may have been entitled to additional funds based on the 2020 return.

As of this week, 635 notices

have been mailed to taxpayers who have not yet received a third stimulus payment due to error or ineligibility. Taxpayers have been advised to resolve pending errors by Dec. 23, 2021, in order to be processed for a payment by the Dec. 31, 2021 deadline. Taxpayers may also claim the 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit to receive the third stimulus payment in the 2022 tax season.

The Division of Revenue & Taxation has also requested a batch of 837 new local stimulus cards amounting to

\$524,500 that should be arriving within the next three to four weeks. DRT will re-load 221 existing cards with additional funds based on 2020 return, amendments or corrections. The local stimulus is \$500 per eligible person.

Due to government closures from Dec. 6 to Dec. 19, 2021, DRT is now operating on a limited basis. The Collections Branch, Cashier Section remains open from 7:30am to 3:30pm. Documents may be submitted via dropbox for processing when office operations are back to normal. (PR)

## Minimized direct contact for permit applications at DCRM

In accordance with the Office of the Governor's directives of ensuring the health and safety of our customers and Bureau of Environment and Coastal Quality-Division of Coastal Resources Management staff, DCRM will be minimizing direct contact between Permitting staff and applicants or permittees by using the DCRM online permit application system.

To apply for a CRM permit, visit [www.dcrm.gov.mp](http://www.dcrm.gov.mp) and select "apply here." Instructions are available to guide you as you navigate through our online permitting system including submission of your application. Additionally, permit applications are available

on our website and can be submitted via email to [permitting@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:permitting@dcrm.gov.mp). Once submitted, permitting staff will contact you to confirm receipt of your application.

For individuals with no internet access, hard copies of applications will be made available for pick-up on the first floor of the BECQ office at the Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan. Application submission will be by appointment only.

All pre-application meetings will be conducted via virtually using Zoom or Google Meet links. For scheduling, call DCRM Permitting with the following contact information below:

■ **BECQ-DCRM Saipan Office**—Contact DCRM at (670) 664-8300 or (670) 588-2924 for assistance. You may also email [permitting@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:permitting@dcrm.gov.mp) for any questions or concerns.

■ **BECQ Rota Satellite Office**—Applications for CRM permits on Rota can be submitted via email to [wpendergrass@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:wpendergrass@dcrm.gov.mp) or by scheduling an appointment. Contact Bill Pendergrass at (670) 532-0464 for assistance.

■ **BECQ Tinian Satellite Office**—Applications for CRM permits on Tinian can be submitted via email to [ehofschneider@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:ehofschneider@dcrm.gov.mp) or by scheduling an appointment. Contact Edwin Hofschneider at (670) 433-3169 for assistance. (PR)

**Precinct 5**

# Holiday Art Bazaar

**When: December 18, 2021**  
**9 A.M. - 3 P.M.**

**Where: Kagman Community Center**

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This is a brief description of the features of Calvo's SelectCare. Before making a final decision, please read the Plan's Federal brochure RI 73-874. All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the Federal brochure. Airfare benefit, Dental Plan and Free Gym Membership are non-FEHB benefits.





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**Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality**  
 Division of Coastal Resources Management  
 P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950  
 Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315  
 www.dcrm.gov.mp



El D. Cabrera  
 Administrator  
 Richard V. Salas  
 Director, DCRM

## RESCHEDULED CRM PUBLIC HEARING

### KOBLERVILLE HOMESTEAD SUBDIVISION PERMIT APPLICATION NO. SMS-2001-X-213-A1

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is RESCHEDULING the public hearing for the proposed additional lots of the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision project on Saipan.

The Department of Public Lands is proposing to increase the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision to 330 residential lots by decreasing the homestead lot size. The project includes installation of water, power, and sewer line connections, stormwater ponding basin, access roads, and sidewalks. The project site is situated on public land identified as Lot No. 048 I 01, measuring approximately 62 acres.

The public hearing for this project is rescheduled for Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 5:00PM, at the **BECQ 2nd Floor Main Conference Room, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.**

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through **Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/6706648315>**. Our Zoom meeting access code may change, please call the DCRM Permitting Office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance at least one-day prior to the public hearing date.

If you are unable to attend, written comments can be submitted to the DCRM Office, Suite 305, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mailed to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or sent by fax at 664-8315, or by email at [ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp). The project files are open for review and comments during regular business hours from 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision project.

/s/ Richard V. Salas  
 Director  
 Division of Coastal Resources Management



## NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514  
 Email: [nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp](mailto:nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp) | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>



## PUBLIC NOTICE

DECEMBER 10, 2021  
 (This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds.)

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Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt Governor Arnold I. Palacios, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman, Ms. Marcie M. Tomokane, wish to announce that its Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) for Program Year 2020 is available for review. Comments made by the general public should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 27, 2021. Written comments must be submitted to the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by contacting Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, at 234-9447/7689 or by email at [deputydirector@nmhcgov.net](mailto:deputydirector@nmhcgov.net).

The report will be submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Honolulu Office, by December 31, 2021. The CAPER encompasses the performance assessment of all HUD-funded programs, administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The report may be viewed at our website at [www.nmhcgov.net](http://www.nmhcgov.net) and NMHC Facebook page. When the government reopens, the report will be available at NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Individuals needing special accommodations to review and comment on the plan must contact the Planning Division for arrangements by calling (670) 234-7689/6866 during regular business hours.

/s/  
 Marcie M. Tomokane  
 Chairwoman of the Board

Tinian Field Office  
 Tel: (670) 433-9213  
 Fax: (670) 433-3690

**"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"**

Rota Field Office  
 Tel: (670) 532-9410  
 Fax: (670) 532-9441

## Public invited to yearend cleanups in CK, Susupe

Members of the community are invited to pitch in for village cleanups in Chalan Kanoa and Susupe this Saturday, Dec. 11, and next Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021.

The Office of Rep. Christina Sablan (Precinct 2) is teaming up with the Lions Centennial Club to host the Dec. 11 village cleanup. Volunteers will meet at 7am at Sugar Dock Beach. Trash bags, gloves, face masks, sanitizers, water, and refreshments will be provided for volunteers.

The following Saturday,

Dec. 18, residents of Chalan Kanoa and Susupe are invited and encouraged to clean up around their homes and neighborhoods that morning and bring the collected trash to a central dumpster bin that will be stationed in the lot south of the Chalan Kanoa cemetery on Texas Road, from 8am to 12pm.

Only household trash and litter picked up from roadsides will be accepted on Dec. 18. No waste will be accepted after 12pm, and no hazardous materials, junk appliances or cars, tires, green

waste, or similar waste items will be accepted. Residents who require supplies such as trash bags or gloves, or who need assistance with trash pickup on Dec. 18 may call Tokie Mojica from the Office of Rep. Christina Sablan at (670) 285-5392.

Residents are also asked to report junk cars abandoned on public lands, or junk cars on their own residential properties that they need assistance removing by calling (670) 664-8829 or (670) 285-5392. The Office of Rep. Christina Sablan is working with the Saipan Mayor's Office and the Zoning Office to coordinate removal.

All participants in these outdoor cleanup events are advised to wear face masks and practice social distancing. For more information, contact the Office of Rep. Christina Sablan at (670) 664-8829 or (670) 285-5392. **(PR)**

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### FHB Gualo Rai closed until further notice

First Hawaiian Bank's Gualo Rai Branch will be temporarily closed until further notice for the safety of its customers and employees. ATM services will still be available, while night depository services will be directed to its Oleai branch. "Please visit our Oleai Branch for your banking needs, or you may also access your accounts through FHB Online and the FHB Mobile app. Please visit [fhb.com](http://fhb.com) for updates," said the bank on its Facebook page. **(PR)**

### Kilili district office on Saipan closed until further notice

In an exercise of extreme caution, the Saipan District Office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan will be closed to the public until further notice. District staff will remain available to assist constituents via phone and email. For assistance, call (670) 323-2647 or email [kilili@mail.house.gov](mailto:kilili@mail.house.gov).

The District Offices on Tinian and Rota will remain open, by-appointment only. To schedule an appointment, call (670) 433-2647 on Tinian or (670) 532-2647 on Rota. **(PR)**

### DFEMS division on Capital Hill closed

This is to inform the public and the business dealing with DFEMS Division of Fire Prevention and Arson Investigation for Fire Permit and Fire Safety Inspection that the office on Capital Hill No. 1340 will be closed. All scheduled Fire Safety Inspections and Fire Permit issuance are temporarily ceased until further notice. **(PR)**

## COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.  
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### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

#### FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARFF RAPID REFILL IMPROVEMENTS AIP 3-69-0002-93/XX

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ARFF Rapid Refill Improvements Project, AIP 3-69-0002-93/XX.

The project is being funded by U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Angie Aguigui at [angie.aguigui@cnmiports.com](mailto:angie.aguigui@cnmiports.com) or Ms. Wendi Prater at [wprater@cnmiports.com](mailto:wprater@cnmiports.com).

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to [wprater@cnmiports.com](mailto:wprater@cnmiports.com) or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, local time, Monday, December 20, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

**CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO**  
 Executive Director

Date: December 2, 2021

## COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.  
 P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN, MP 96950  
 PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962  
 WEBSITE: [WWW.CNMI-PORTS.COM](http://WWW.CNMI-PORTS.COM)

### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

#### FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PERIMETER SECURITY FENCE REPLACEMENT PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-002-22 (AIP PENDING)

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the replacement of the perimeter security fencing at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SA-002-22 (AIP pending).

The project is being funded by U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at [wprater@cnmiports.com](mailto:wprater@cnmiports.com) or Ms. Angie Aguigui at [angie.aguigui@cnmiports.com](mailto:angie.aguigui@cnmiports.com).

Questions regarding this request for RFQ statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to [wprater@cnmiports.com](mailto:wprater@cnmiports.com) or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, local time, Monday, December 20, 2021.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

**CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO**  
 Executive Director

Date: December 2, 2021



• SINAPALO • SONGSONG • SAN JOSE • AS LITO • AS MAHETOG • AS MATUIS • AS PERDIDO • AS TEO •



# Show Us Your Village Pride

Let's make The Marianas  
*festive & beautiful*  
for the holidays!



## MVP CHRISTMAS DECORATING CONTEST

Open to schools, residents, organizations, and businesses

Beautify and decorate your home, community center or basketball court, village's entrance, and business for a chance to win prizes! Let's make The Marianas festive and beautiful this holiday season. See contest criteria at [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com). Register by Dec. 15. Contest Dates: Dec. 18 - Jan. 6

### CATEGORIES:

- Most Festive School
- Most Festive Home
- Most Festive Business
- Most Festive Village



## ADOPT-A-MEDIAN PROGRAM

Open to schools, residents, organizations, and businesses

Help make our streets and sidewalks safer for pedestrians and motorists! Schools, groups, families, and businesses can adopt, clean, and paint medians, sidewalks, or crosswalks in their villages. GCEA will provide the supplies. Students, you will earn service hours for your participation. Together, We Can! Go to [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com) to sign up or view the list of sites available.

- Dates extended!
- Ongoing registration for schools through Feb. 23, 2022
- School projects should be completed by: Mar. 21, 2022
- Open year-round for businesses, organizations, and families



## MVP BUS STOP BEAUTIFICATION CONTEST

Open to schools, residents, organizations, and businesses

Beautify, design, and paint a bus stop in your village and compete for awesome prizes! Show us what makes your village unique and beautiful. Download the application at [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com). Students earn service hours for their participation.

- Register now through Feb. 16, 2022
- Bus Stop Beautification projects should be completed by: Mar. 15, 2022
- Judging: Mar. 16-23, 2022
- Announcement of winners: Mar. 31, 2022

Schools, organizations, and businesses can sign up for the contests at [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com).

**#BeAnMVP #MarianasVillagePride #TogetherWeCanMarianas**

• I LIYANG • I NAFTAN • KAGMAN • KANNAT TABLA • KOBLERVILLE • LOWER BASE • MARPI • NAVY HILL •

### JOIN THESE CORPORATE MVPS AND BECOME A SPONSOR.

All levels and prizes are welcome. Send an email to [gceacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:gceacnmi@gmail.com) to request a sponsorship packet.



For more information about how to participate, visit [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com). Engage with the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cnmieconomy) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/cnmieconomy) [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@cnmieconomy) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/cnmieconomy) @cnmieconomy #BeAnMVP #MarianasVillagePride #TogetherWeCanMarianas



# Opinion

Hafa Adair

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## Sentencing Aung San Suu Kyi to prison is just one more turn on Myanmar's spiral downward

In the last decade, Aung San Suu Kyi has gone from being one of the most prominent symbols of democracy in the world to being one of the most rebuked.

Her father, the founder of Myanmar's military, became a politician and activist who devoted himself to the effort to win independence from Britain but was assassinated before he could see that achieved. Eventually Suu Kyi became the de facto leader of a blended government, in which the military agreed to share power with civilians elected by the people of Myanmar. It was an extraordinary—if imperfect—collaboration and it put Myanmar, once shunned and sanctioned by the U.S. government and other Western countries, on a new footing with the U.S.

But things went wrong in just a matter of years. It became shockingly clear that Suu Kyi had no interest in extending democratic rights to her country's Rohingya Muslims, one of the most oppressed minorities in the world. When the military was accused of the massacre of Rohingya—deemed to be genocide by U.N. investigators—at the United Nations' International Court of Justice at The Hague in 2017, she spoke in defense of the military, cementing her transition from revered to reviled in the eyes of former admirers.

In February, the fragile democracy crumbled and the military retook power, ousting Suu Kyi (and other civilian leaders) and holding her at an undisclosed location. In the last year, the military has killed 1,300 people and arrested more than 10,700, according to the most recent count by the Assistance Assn. for Political Prisoners, a Thailand-based human rights group.

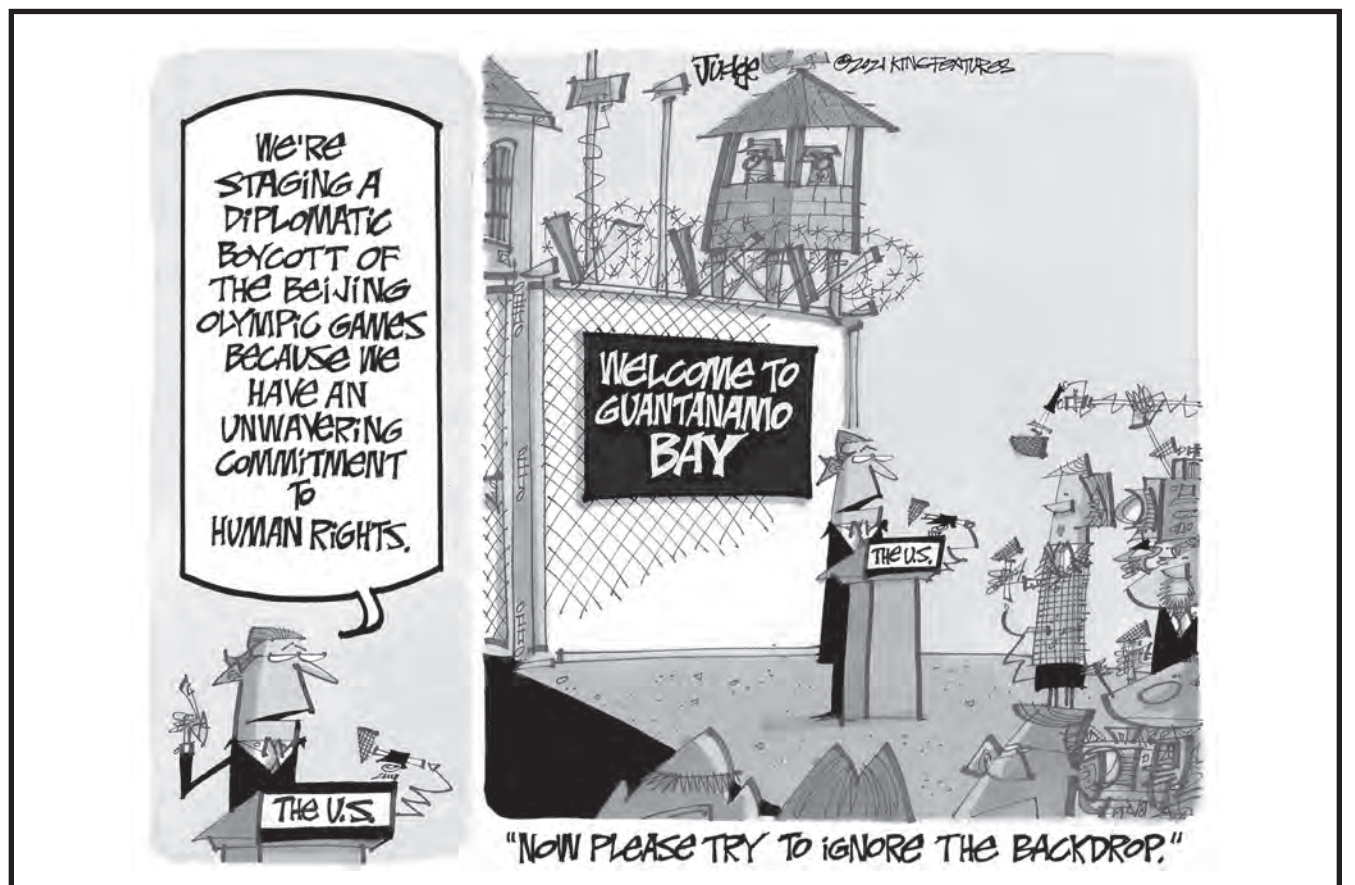
Now, Suu Kyi has been found guilty of absurd charges—inciting public unrest and breaching COVID protocols—and sentenced to two years under house arrest. She faces more charges that could put her in prison for the rest of her life. She is 76.

It is one more alarming sign of the Myanmar military's grip on a country that only several years ago looked like it might prosper as a democracy. And it is an urgent signal to the U.S. and its allies to put more economic pressure on Myanmar to return the country to civilian hands and free the leaders, including Suu Kyi, that it is holding.

The nonprofit Human Rights Watch has urged large investors in oil and gas companies doing business in Myanmar to take actions to stop the flow of billions into the hands of the military, which controls most of those industries. Brad Adams, the Asia director of Human Rights Watch, says his organization would like to see Congress require U.S. energy companies doing business in Myanmar to put their revenue into an escrow account for the people of Myanmar instead of the military until the government is returned to civilians.

That's a bold and creative idea. And it's possible. If the U.S. wants to help the people of Myanmar to have a chance again at life under democratic rule, it's time to do something more drastic.

©2021 Los Angeles Times



## The king of hypocrisy

Nike's latest TV ad is another slick paean to individual empowerment and prevailing despite the naysayers.

Centered around Memphis Grizzlies star Ja Morant, the commercial features various people doubting that Morant can keep up his stellar play, to which someone always cheekily replies, "Says who?"

Yes, Nike believes anything is possible—so long as it doesn't involve doing anything to cross one of the world's most hideously repressive regimes.

The grotesque hypocrisy of the Nike-NBA industrial complex and its biggest star, LeBron James, has been underlined in recent weeks by Boston Celtics player Enes Kanter, who has been on a one-man crusade against the Chinese Communist Party and those too cowardly or greedy to call it out.

James—the owner of four NBA championship rings who has appeared in a jaw-dropping 10 NBA finals—has views on all sorts of public controversies and doesn't hesitate to air them so long as they are comfortably within the fashionable woke consensus.

On China, though, he's mute. So are his employers. They all portray themselves as champions of social justice and of courage and striving, but their commitment to these causes and values stops at the water's edge—and at their bottom line.

When a couple of years ago, the Houston Rockets general manager got thrown under the bus by the NBA for tweeting in support of pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong, King James pronounced him "not educated on the situation."

The Lakers forward affirmed a right to free speech—thanks, GOAT!—but said we have to be careful what we say. "So many people," he warned, "could have been harmed, not only financially but physically, emotionally, spiritually."

Never has so much harm been attributed to a small message of public support for plucky idealists about to be steamrolled by a totalitarian government.

During the Kyle Rittenhouse trial, by the way, James mocked Rittenhouse's tears on the stand, doubting they were real—apparently because he's an expert on what constitutes genuine signs of post-traumatic stress.

If Rittenhouse had control over whether a vast market would be open to James and the corporations he's affiliated with, the Lakers star surely would have stayed silent.

When Kanter tweeted, "Money over Morals for the 'King,'"

On China, though, he's mute. So are his employers. They all portray themselves as champions of social justice and of courage and striving, but their commitment to these causes and values stops at the water's edge—and at their bottom line.

By RICH LOWRY

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Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



and wore sneakers portraying James bowing down to get crowned by Chinese dictator Xi Jinping for a Celtics-Lakers game, James brushed it off. He accused Kanter of "trying to use my name to create an opportunity for himself."

Actually, Kanter's activism, calling out his league and a massively influential corporation, is what everyone says they value—a lonely, unwelcome campaign against well-heeled interests too compromised to defy a powerful entity perpetrating rank injustices.

After Nike got blowback in China for a relatively anodyne statement expressing concern about forced labor in Xinjiang—the epicenter of the regime's repression of the Uyghurs—the company's CEO said Nike is "a brand of China and for China."

Nike lobbied Congress to weaken an anti-forced-labor bill, lest a measure aimed at crimping a vast human-rights abuse discomfit the corporate giant too greatly.

"Says who?" the new Nike ad asks. Clearly, the Chinese regime.

"You can't stop us," intoned a viral ad last year. Well, actually you can, provided you are an authoritarian bully with an enormous consumer base.

"Just do it" went the most iconic Nike ad. No, second thought, better to "Just don't" if it might anger a government that disappeared a star athlete for the offense of accusing an official of sexual assault and is preparing to invade a neighboring country.

If China were to take Taiwan, would the NBA, Nike or LeBron James do anything more than offer vague expressions of concern and piffle about how the situation is complicated?

We certainly know what Enes Kanter would say. Which is why he rightly deserves a Nike ad celebrating his go-it-alone truth-telling, and why, of course, he'll never get one.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com); or through our website at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com).

## It's time to implement a Universal Garbage Collection program in the Marianas

**T**rash. It's everywhere—along our beaches, buried underneath the soil, in our ocean, and illegally dumped in various parts of the islands. It is unsightly, unhealthy, and threatens our environment and natural resources.

We know something must be done about this issue, and a reliable Universal Garbage Collection system is what the CNMI needs right now. This idea has been discussed for years and several legislative terms, and I'm glad to see the CNMI take the steps in forming a task force that is fully committed to focusing on this solution. A reliable UGC program will surely alleviate the issue of trash throughout our community and in private and public spaces.

A major benefit of UGC is that our trash will be picked up from our homes. There won't be regular visits to the transfer station or landfill. Hopefully, we can see an end to illegal dumping sites.

It is our responsibility to properly dispose of our trash—for the overall health of our community and our environment.

When I was in Scotland for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, the garbage collectors went on strike. Garbage collector unions—comprising over 1,000 workers—went on strike for eight days. They were protesting due to a lack of respect from management, low wages, and poor working conditions.

According to reports by *The New York Times* and other sources, many garbage collectors in Glasgow earn between \$25,000-\$27,000 per year, yet these wages have not kept up with the pace of waste production in the city. Especially during this pandemic, there has been a surge in waste due to takeout and online food deliveries. Trash receptacles have been swamped, thus becoming ideal homes for pests such as rats. It's common to see rats attack garbage collectors, and there are instances when garbage collectors were sent to outpatient clinics for treatment due to injuries.

The result of the strike was evident—garbage bins were visibly overflowing at every street in the city. Currently, the unions and city officials are in talks to discuss what improvements can be made. However, the unions have mentioned their intention to resume the strikes leading up to the Christmas and New Year holidays if their demands for higher wages and others are not met.

This strike highlights the growing disconnection between major governments, communities, and workers around the realities of trash, not just in Scotland but around the world and in the Marianas, too.

The Universal Garbage Collection Task Force aims to bridge this gap and offer a solution that works for all of us. As chair-

**TRASH TALK**

By SHEILA J. BABAUTA

Special to the Saipan Tribune



*Rep. Sheila J. Babauta is a member of the 22nd CNMI Legislature and holds leadership positions in the Natural and Cultural Resources Committee, Education Committee, and the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation. She is a passionate advocate for the responsible management of the Marianas' natural resources and improving the quality of life for all.*

woman of the Natural Resources Committee, an environmental advocate, and a daughter of the Marianas, I am extremely supportive of this effort. I encourage our people to learn more about it, support this initiative, and take part in making this happen for our islands and our people.

*For more information about the Universal Garbage Collection initiative, visit the GCEA website at [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com). Engage with the UGC Task Force via email at [gceacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:gceacnmi@gmail.com).*

## Let's show our Christmas spirit in our villages

**C**hristmas is a season of peace, joy, and hope for a fresh start and a brighter new year ahead. For my family and I, Christmas is a time for us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, my favorite tradition. Our family Christmas tradition goes far back as far as the '80s when my Tudela family would bring Baby Jesus into the homes of our parishioners. I remember starting early at 6am and finishing around sunset. We would visit parishioners in San Vicente, Dandan, Aslito, Kannat Tabla, and As Terlaje.

This tradition, along with seeing the happy faces on my children as they carried the Baby Jesus from door to door, has always been something I look forward to every December. However, like December 2020 and with the recent spike of COVID-19 cases in the Marianas, the holidays will be spent differently. The only thing that we can do now is to figure out how else we can spend Christmas while we follow the 3Ws—washing hands, waiting at a distance, and wearing a mask. This is also a good time to brainstorm new ways to follow old traditions, while looking forward to brighter times ahead.

Speaking of old traditions, growing up I would get excited when I see buildings that were illuminated with Christmas lights.

When I had moved abroad for college, I would drive around to see the Christmas displays in my area to uplift my spirit. For the past five years, the annual Christmas Village is a way our family can give our people the chance to be merry and bright, uplift their spirits, find peace and comfort, and put a smile on their faces. It is especially important during this holiday season as we continue to battle the pandemic.

This year, the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors established the Marianas Village Pride Christmas Decorating Contest to promote beautification in the villages. This is the perfect opportunity for schools, residents, businesses, and village residents to bring the festivities into their villages, homes, and schools while improving our islands. GCEA will be accepting registration through Dec. 15 on its website [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com). The MVP Christmas Decorating Contest will be open from Dec. 18 to Jan. 6 and submissions will be judged by Most Festive School, Home, Business, and Village. I know many of you decorate your homes each year, so I encourage you to participate in this collective program and maybe win a prize.

As we rejoice and celebrate this wonderful Christmas season, let us also not forget how lucky we are to be alive today. Make this

GOVERNOR'S  
COUNCIL OF  
ECONOMIC  
ADVISORS**TOGETHER, WE CAN**

By DIANN TORRES

Special to the Saipan Tribune



*Diann Torres is the first lady of the Northern Mariana Islands, where she established the Lady Diann Torres Foundation to better the lives of residents in the islands. The foundation has supported fundraising for cancer research, women's empowerment conferences, and the cultural history of indigenous populations.*

Christmas a memorable and safe one and don't forget to pray. Let's pause for a moment and thank God Almighty for the blessings bestowed upon every one of us and as we enter the new year. May your hearts be happy and at peace. Have a wonderful time with your loved one, and I wish you all a safe and prosperous New Year!

*For more information, visit the GCEA at [cnmieconomy.com](http://cnmieconomy.com), on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at [gceacnmi@gmail.com](mailto:gceacnmi@gmail.com).*

## If I should die

**I**'ve come to know that in the wake of every loved one's passing lies a turbulent trail of tears adrift in the void left behind. As one lovable actor famously responded when asked what he thought happens when we die, "I know that the ones who love us will miss us." I don't take lightly the pain of loss as such and pray that all who experience it learn to live with it and find comfort in their own remaining years of life somehow.

The general frenzy and fear-mongering around the issue of COVID-19 stands as a stark reminder of our very human aversion to death and dying. And yet we know with absolute certainty that death is an absolute certainty—"Death comes to us all; even at our birth—even at our birth, death does but stand aside a little. And every day he looks towards us and muses somewhat to himself whether that day or the next he will draw nigh. It is the law of nature, and the will of God" (Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*). One way or another we all fall down—ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

I find myself more and more irritable over all things "COVID-related," the new household term of our times. Mostly I am sick of how willingly so many of us have relegated our public narrative to be driven by fear—I dare say even panic—and am generally fed up with people in leadership positions fueling public frustrations and fear with their own frustrations and fear. No doubt we are all frustrated, but not all of us are afraid. So show me a leader who puts his own fears aside and maintains composure in the face of adversity and I'll show a leader I will gladly

follow. Those who cannot do as much don't get to walk at the front of my line.

On that note, it seems all lines lead to COVID isolation/quarantine. While I have no doubt that the powers-that-be are acting with the best of intentions, I really cannot help my visceral disgust with ongoing draconian mandates to isolate (or rather lock people up). The truth is that for some of us, just the thought of being locked in a room with no option to get out creates a serious mental health (or rather illness) toll. I couldn't help but to reflect on this issue at the thought of the young man reported to have completed suicide while being forced into isolation—God rest him.

Some provisional 2020 data on suicide rates out of England has found no evidence that national suicide rates increased due to the pandemic; however, "The effects of the pandemic are being disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable people in society and are exacerbating factors we know are related to suicide" ([samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org) – Coronavirus and Suicide Risk).

"The combination of physical distancing, economic stress, barriers to mental health treatment, pervasive national anxiety, and a spike in gun sales are creating what *JAMA Psychiatry* referred to as "a perfect storm" for suicide mortality" ([psycm.net](http://psycm.net) – Impact of COVID-19 on Suicide Rates)

Furthermore, "The research has been clear on this one for years: isolation and loneliness is bad for our health—both physical and mental. There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness significantly increase risk for premature mortality, and

By JIM RAYPHAND

Special to the Saipan Tribune



*Jim Rayphand is executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.*

the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators" (Lunstad).

Knowing this, why are we so quick to force people into isolation? And why given our local case of death by suicide while in lock-up at a government mandated facility aren't we developing reactionary protocols to prevent further such deaths as we've done for COVID-related deaths? Is death by suicide somehow less of a concern than a COVID-related death?

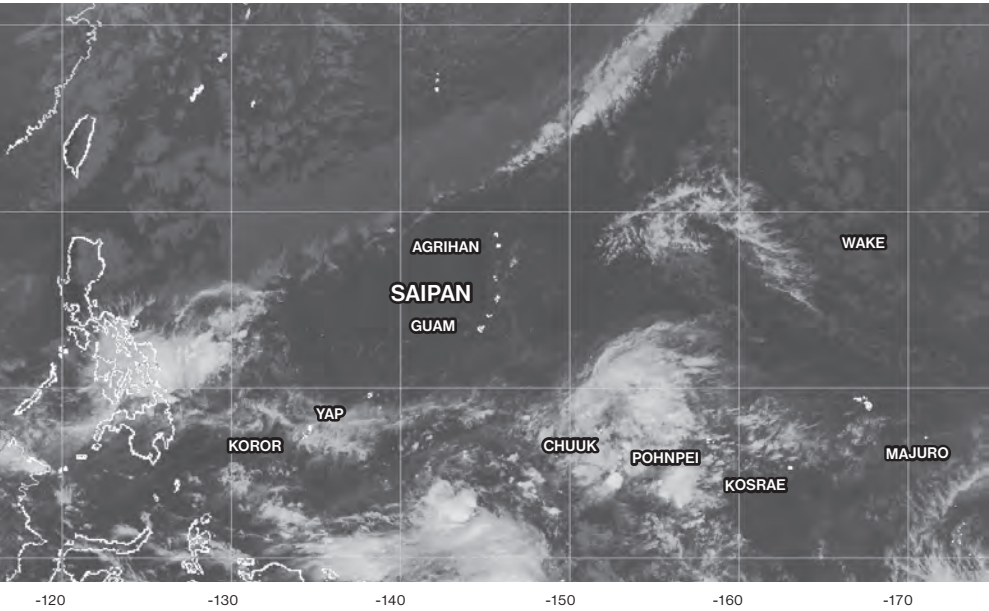
In any event, if I should die, please don't dare say it was because of COVID; in fact, 50 years of consuming excess amounts of sugar, salt, alcohol and other unknown, if not incendiary, substances not intended for human consumption are the more likely culprits. Simply, there lies a man who took his last breath and is no longer with us.

For information on advocacy for individuals with mental illness, please contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice] / 235-7275 [fax] or contact us online at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
85°	76°	87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 7:06 AM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Weather is quiet across the Marianas this morning with isolated showers and moderate trade winds. Altimetry and buoy data show that seas remain somewhat elevated at around 8 feet. Satellite shows some showers developing well east of the islands, between 148E and 150E.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)*

## STOP THE SPREAD

**T**he Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
  - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
  - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at [www.chcc.gov.mp](http://www.chcc.gov.mp) or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit [www.governor.gov.mp](http://www.governor.gov.mp) and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at [www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19](http://www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19).

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MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Sunday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM
Monday	6:33 AM	5:48 PM
Tuesday	6:34 AM	5:48 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	11:12 AM	10:55 PM	-
Saturday	11:57 AM	11:50 PM	-
Sunday	-	12:41 AM	1:14 PM
Monday	-	1:30 AM	1:49 PM
Tuesday	-	2:18 AM	2:24 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°	
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 27°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	68° / 59°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 70°	
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	77° / 50°	
Manila	Rain	88° / 75°	
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 54°	
Miami	Thunderstorms	80° / 65°	
New York	Mostly Cloudy	43° / 36°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	48° / 39°	
Paris	Showers	41° / 28°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 43°	
Rome	Rain	59° / 46°	
Salem	Showers	41° / 28°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60° / 45°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 34°	
Tokyo	Sunny	48° / 34°	
Washington, DC	Cloudy	43° / 33°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
6:18 AM	Low Tide	-0.31	
1:53 PM	High Tide	1.72	
7:56 PM	Low Tide	0.96	
11:58 PM	High Tide	1.29	

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable



# Business

## New COVID-19 antibody drug OK'd to protect most vulnerable

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal health officials on Wednesday authorized a new COVID-19 antibody drug for people with serious health problems or allergies who can't get adequate protection from vaccination.

Antibody drugs have been a standard treatment for treating COVID-19 infections for over a year. But the AstraZeneca antibody drug cleared by the Food and Drug Administration is different. It's the first intended for long-term prevention against COVID-19 infection, rather than a short-term treatment.

People who could benefit from the antibody drug include cancer patients, organ transplant recipients and people taking immune-suppressing drugs for conditions like rheumatoid arthritis. Health experts estimate about 2% to 3% of the U.S. population

falls into that group.

"These people still have to shelter in place because they're at really high risk of severe disease and death," said Dr. David Boulware of the University of Minnesota, ahead of the announcement. "So having this therapy will enable a lot of them to get back to their normal lives."

Specifically, the FDA authorized the AstraZeneca drug called Evusheld for adults and children 12 and older whose immune systems haven't responded adequately to COVID-19 vaccines or have a history of severe allergic reactions to the shots. Regulators said the required two antibody injections may be effective at preventing COVID-19 infections for six months.

Like similar drugs, AstraZeneca's delivers laboratory-made versions of human antibody proteins, which help



This image provided by AstraZeneca in December 2021 shows packaging and vials for the company's Evusheld medication. AP

the immune system fight off viruses and other infections.

The FDA and other health authorities have stressed that

antibody drugs are not a substitute for vaccines, which are the most effective, long-lasting and economical form

of virus protection. Antibody drugs are tricky to manufacture and often cost more than \$1,000 per dose compared

with vaccines that are typically under \$30 per shot.

The FDA has authorized three other antibody therapies from Regeneron, Eli Lilly and GlaxoSmithKline, with the U.S. government purchasing hundreds of thousands of doses. All require an IV or injection. They are used to treat people with recent infections who have the highest risk of progressing to severe COVID-19 because of other health issues. Two can be used to prevent infection after a possible coronavirus exposure.

AstraZeneca's drug would be used differently—only as a long-term preventive measure in people who have increased vulnerability to the virus.

In a company study, people who received Evusheld had a 77% lower risk of infection than people who received a dummy shot over six months, the FDA said.

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### US orders arms embargo on Cambodia, cites Chinese influence

BANGKOK (AP)—The U.S. has ordered an arms embargo on Cambodia, citing deepening Chinese military influence, corruption and human rights abuses by the government and armed forces in the Southeast Asian country. The added restrictions on defense related goods and services, issued by the State and Commerce departments, are due to take effect Thursday. A pre-publication notice in the Federal Register said developments in Cambodia were "contrary to U.S. national security and foreign policy interests." The aim of the embargo is to ensure that defense-related items are not available to Cambodia's military and military intelligence services without advance review by the U.S. government, it said.

#### WH has new slogan on infrastructure, but message the same

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—President Joe Biden unveiled a new slogan for his \$1 trillion infrastructure package on Wednesday, but his overall message is staying largely the same. Biden, trying to rebound from sagging poll numbers, rebranded his Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework as "Building a Better America." He spoke at the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, surrounded by buses and signs featuring the new slogan as he continued a weekslong tour to put greater focus on the planned spending for roads, bridges, water systems, broadband and greater resilience against climate change. The economy has revived since Biden took office, but high inflation, political polarization and the inability to fully break free of the coronavirus pandemic have all hurt his popularity. The new slogan for his big, just-passed infrastructure package says the president's bipartisan deal will improve the country in ways well beyond repairing its aging roads and bridges.

#### Pfizer says COVID booster offers protection against omicron

Pfizer said Wednesday that a booster of its COVID-19 vaccine may offer important protection against the new omicron variant even though the initial two doses appear significantly less effective. Pfizer and its partner BioNTech said that while two doses may not be strong enough to prevent infection, lab tests showed a booster increased by 25-fold people's levels of antibodies capable of fighting off omicron. For people who haven't yet had a booster, the companies said two doses still should prevent severe disease or death. Health authorities in the U.S. and other countries have urged eligible people to get a third dose even before these results. "Go and get your third boost as soon as possible," Dr. Mikael Dolsten, Pfizer's chief scientific officer, told The Associated Press. (AP)

## Senate rejects Biden's vaccine mandate for businesses

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate narrowly approved a resolution Wednesday to nullify the Biden administration's requirement that businesses with 100 or more workers have their employees be vaccinated against the coronavirus or submit to weekly testing.

The vote was 52-48. The Democratic-led House is unlikely to take the measure up, which means the mandate would stand, though courts have put it on hold for now. Still, the vote gave senators a chance to voice opposition to a policy that they say has sparked fears back home from businesses and from unvaccinated constituents who worry about losing their jobs should the rule go into effect.

"Every so often Washington D.C. does something that lights up the phone lines. This is one of these moments," said

Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont. At home, he said, "this issue is what I hear about. This issue is a top-of-mind issue."

Lawmakers can invalidate certain federal agency regulations if a joint resolution is approved by both houses of Congress and signed by the president, or if Congress overrides a presidential veto. That's unlikely to happen in this case.

Under the rule, private-sector companies with 100 or more workers must require their employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or be tested for the virus weekly and wear masks on the job. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration said it would work with companies on compliance but would fine them up to more than \$13,000 for each violation, though implementation and

enforcement is suspended as the litigation unfolds.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Americans who have refused to get vaccinated are the biggest impediment to ending the pandemic. He implied that some of the resistance to mandated vaccines is based on politics.

"Some of the anti-vaxxers here in this chamber remind me of what happened 400 years ago when people were clinging to the fact that the sun revolved around the Earth. They just didn't believe science. Or 500 years ago when they were sure the Earth was flat," Schumer said.

Schumer said social media has played a role in spreading falsehoods about the vaccine, and "so has the far right." He urged senators to vote against the resolution, sponsored by Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind.

Republicans said they are supportive of the vaccine, but that the mandate amounts to government overreach.

"His mandates are under fire in the courts. Main Street job creators are complaining against it, and tonight, the U.S. Senate must send a clear message: back off this bad idea," Braun said.

Some argued that the mandate may even contribute to people not getting vaccinated.

"I think, actually, the mandate has made it worse in terms of hardening people who don't want to be told what to do by the government," said Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo.

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said a telephone town hall she recently held with constituents made clear they are concerned about keeping their job if the mandate goes into effect.

## Report: Chinese hackers targeted Southeast Asian nations

BANGKOK (AP)—Chinese hackers, likely state-sponsored, have been broadly targeting government and private-sector organizations across Southeast Asia, including those closely involved with Beijing on infrastructure development projects, according to a report released Wednesday by a U.S.-based private cybersecurity company.

Specific targets included the Thai prime minister's office and the Thai army, the Indonesian and Philippine navies, Vietnam's national assembly and the central office of its Communist Party, and Malaysia's Ministry of Defense, according to the Insikt Group, the threat research division of Massachu-

setts-based Recorded Future.

Insikt said it determined that the high-profile military and government organizations in Southeast Asia had been compromised over the last nine months by hackers using custom malware families such as FunnyDream and Chinoxy. Those custom tools are not publicly available and are used by multiple groups believed to be Chinese state-sponsored, the group said.

The targeting also aligns with the political and economic goals of the Chinese government, bolstering the suspicion it is state-sponsored, Insikt said.

"We believe this activity is highly likely to be a state actor

as the observed long term targeted intrusions into high value government and political targets is consistent with cyberespionage activity, coupled with identified technical links to known Chinese state-sponsored activity," the company told The Associated Press.

China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the allegations.

In the past, Chinese authorities have consistently denied any form of state-sponsored hacking, instead saying China itself is a major target of cyberattacks.

Of the cyber intrusions it tracked, Insikt Group said Malaysia, Indonesia and Viet-

nam were the top three targeted countries. Also targeted were Myanmar, the Philippines, Laos, Thailand, Singapore and Cambodia.

All countries were notified in October of the findings, though it is thought that at least some of the activity is ongoing, the company said.

"Throughout 2021, Insikt Group tracked a persistent cyber espionage campaign targeting the prime minister's offices, military entities, and government departments of rival South China Sea claimants Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines," the company said. "Additional victims during the same period include organizations in Indonesia and Thailand."



# Nation

## The AP Interview: CDC chief says omicron mostly mild so far

ATLANTA (AP)—More than 40 people in the U.S. have been found to be infected with the omicron variant so far, and

more than three-quarters of them had been vaccinated, the chief of the CDC said Wednesday. But she said nearly all of

them were only mildly ill.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Cen-

ters for Disease Control and Prevention, said the data is very limited and the agency is working on a more detailed

analysis of what the new mutant form of the coronavirus might hold for the U.S.

“What we generally know is the more mutations a variant has, the higher level you need your immunity to be. ... We want to make sure we bolster everybody’s immunity. And that’s really what motivated the decision to expand our guidance,” Walensky said, referencing the recent approval of boosters for all adults.

She said “the disease is mild” in almost all of the cases seen so far, with reported symptoms mainly cough, congestion and fatigue. One person was hospitalized, but no deaths have been reported, CDC officials said.

Some cases can become increasingly severe as days and weeks pass, and Walensky noted that the data is a very early, first glimpse of U.S. omicron infections. The earliest onset of symptoms of any of the first 40 or so cases was Nov. 15, according to the CDC.

The omicron variant was first identified in South Africa last month and has since been reported in 57 countries, according to the World Health Organization.

The first U.S. case was

reported on Dec. 1. As of Wednesday afternoon, the CDC had recorded 43 cases in 19 states. Most were young adults. About a third of those patients had traveled internationally.

More than three-quarters of those patients had been vaccinated, and a third had boosters, Walensky said. Boosters take about two weeks to reach full effect, and some

of the patients had received their most recent shot within that period, CDC officials said.

Fewer than 1% of the U.S. COVID-19 cases genetically sequenced last week were the omicron variant; the delta variant accounted for more than 99%.

Scientists are trying to better understand how easily it spreads. British officials said Wednesday that they think the omicron variant could become the dominant version of the coronavirus in the United Kingdom in as soon as a month.

The CDC has yet to make any projections on how the variant could affect the course of the pandemic in the U.S. Walensky said officials are gathering data but many factors could influence how the pandemic evolves.



Walensky

## COVID cases spike even as US hits 200M vaccine milestone



AP

Leanna Arcila, 7, is licked by Watson, a therapy dog with the Pawtucket police department, as she receives her COVID-19 vaccination from Dr. Eugenio Fernandez at Nathanael Greene Elementary School in Pawtucket, R.I., Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021.

**PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)**—The number of Americans fully vaccinated against COVID-19 reached 200 million Wednesday amid a dispiriting holiday-season spike in cases and hospitalizations that has hit even New England, one of the most highly inoculated corners of the country.

New cases in the U.S. climbed from an average of nearly 95,000 a day on Nov. 22 to almost 119,000 a day this week, and hospitalizations are up 25% from a month ago. The increases are due almost entirely to the delta variant, though

the omicron mutation has been detected in about 20 states and is sure to spread even more.

Deaths are running close to 1,600 a day on average, back up to where they were in October. And the overall U.S. death toll less than two years into the crisis could hit another heart-breaking milestone, 800,000, in a matter of days.

The situation is not as dire as last year’s holiday-season surge, before the public had access to COVID-19 vaccines, but the 60% of the U.S. population that is fully vaccinated has not been enough to pre-

vent hot spots.

The cold weather, Thanksgiving gatherings and a big rebound in holiday travel are all believed to be playing a role, along with public weariness with pandemic restrictions.

Lawrence Gostin, director of the WHO Collaborating Center on Public Health Law and Human Rights at Georgetown University, likened the virus to a wildfire.

“You can clear a forest of the shrubbery. But if you leave some shrubs and trees standing, the fire will find them,” Gostin said. “The virus will find you.

It is searching for hosts that are not immune. The fact that you live in New England or New York doesn’t insulate you.”

Demand for the vaccine—with recent approval of boosters for all adults and shots for elementary school children—has been high amid the surge and the emergence of the omicron variant, whose dangers are still not fully understood. On Wednesday, Pfizer said that the initial two shots of its vaccine appear significantly less effective against omicron but that a booster dose may offer important protection.

## Father, son arrested in wildfire that threatened Lake Tahoe

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)**—A father and son were arrested Wednesday on suspicion of starting a massive California wildfire that destroyed many homes and forced tens of thousands of people to flee Lake Tahoe communities earlier this year, authorities said.

David Scott Smith, 66, and his son, Travis Shane Smith, 32, are accused of reckless arson in a warrant issued before formal charges are filed, the El Dorado County District Attorney’s office said.

Mark Reichel, the attorney for both men, said they were arrested Wednesday afternoon and that reckless arson means

starting a blaze by accident but “to such a degree that it was considered reckless.”

Authorities allege they caused homes to burn and people to be seriously injured in the fire that began in August. The Caldor fire scorched more than 346 square miles (897 square kilometers) from east of Sacramento to the Nevada border, threatening ski resorts and other prominent recreational areas.

The fire destroyed more than 1,000 homes and other buildings while crossing a mostly remote forested area of seasonal cabins.

The fire crossed through

three northern counties, destroyed much of the small community of Grizzly Flats and forced tens of thousands of people to evacuate the resort town of South Lake Tahoe before it was contained in October. Five people were injured.

It was one of two massive fires last summer that for the first time in modern history crossed the Sierra Nevada range.

El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson provided few details about the arrest of the Smiths, citing the investigation.

Reichel, the men’s lawyer, said: “They are absolutely

100% innocent.”

Reichel said he did not know details of the accusation, such as how authorities allege the fire was set.

He said Travis Smith is an electrician and was with his father near where the fire started. The son called 911 to report seeing flames, Reichel said.

The son made several 911 calls because the calls kept dropping in the rugged area, and both men also warned campers about the fire, Reichel said.

“Neither one has ever been in trouble with the law in their life. They’re very law-abiding people,” he said.

## California plans to be abortion sanctuary if Roe overturned

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)**—With more than two dozen states poised to ban abortion if the U.S. Supreme Court gives them the OK next year, California clinics and their allies in the state Legislature on Wednesday revealed a plan to make the state a “sanctuary” for those seeking reproductive care, including possibly paying for travel, lodging and procedures for people from other states.

The California Future of Abortion Council, made up of more than 40 abortion providers and advocacy groups, released a list of 45 recommendations for the state to consider if the high court overturns *Roe v. Wade*—the 48-year-old decision that forbids states from outlawing abortion.

The recommendations are not just a liberal fantasy. Some of the state’s most important policymakers helped write them, including Toni Atkins, the San Diego Democrat who leads the state Senate and attend-

ed multiple meetings.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom started the group himself and in an interview last week with The Associated Press said some of the report’s details will be included in his budget proposal in January.

“We’ll be a sanctuary,” Newsom said, adding he’s aware patients will likely travel to California from other states to seek abortions. “We are looking at ways to support that inevitability and looking at ways to expand our protections.”

Abortion, perhaps more than any other issue, has divided the country for decades along mostly traditional partisan lines. A new decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, which could come next summer, would be the culmination of more than 40 years of conservative activism. But Wednesday’s report offers a first glimpse of how Democratic-dominated states could respond and how the debate over abortion access would change.



# Asia

## Alleged massacre in Myanmar village highlights bitter fight

**BANGKOK** (AP)—Outrage spread on social media in Myanmar on Wednesday over images and accounts of the alleged killing and burning of 11 villagers captured by government troops in the country's northwest.

Photos and a video of charred corpses in Done Taw village in Sagaing region circulated widely Tuesday. They were said to be have been taken shortly after the men were killed and their bodies set on fire.

The material could not be independently verified. An account given to The Associated Press by a person who said he went to the scene generally matched descriptions of the incident carried by independent Myanmar media.

The government has not commented on the allegations. If confirmed, they would be the latest atrocity in an increasingly bitter struggle following the military's seizure of power in February and ouster of the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The takeover was initially met with nonviolent street protests, but after police and soldiers used lethal force against demonstrators, vio-

lence escalated as opponents of military rule took up arms in self defense.

The witness who spoke to the AP said about 50 troops marched into Done Taw village at about 11 a.m. Tuesday, seizing anyone who did not manage to flee.

"They arrested 11 innocent villagers," said the witness, who described himself as a farmer and an activist and asked to remain anonymous for his own safety.

He added that the captured men were not members of the locally organized People's Defense Force, which sometimes engages the army in combat. He said the captives had their hands tied behind them and were set on fire.

He did not give a reason for the soldiers' assault. Accounts in Myanmar media said they appeared to have acted in retaliation for an attack earlier that morning by People's Defense Force members.

Other witnesses cited in Myanmar media said the victims were members of a defense force, though the witness who spoke to the AP described them as members of a less formally organized village protection group.



In this image from video taken Dec. 7, 2021, bloodstain is seen on the ground near charred corpses in Done Taw village in the Sagaing region of Myanmar. AP

There are resistance activities in the cities and the countryside, but the fighting is deadliest in rural areas where the army can unleash greater force against its targets. In recent months the struggle has been sharpest in Sagaing and other areas of the northwest.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric expressed deep concern at the reports "of the horrific killing of 11 people" and

strongly condemned such violence, saying "credible reports indicate that five children were among those people killed."

Dujarric reminded Myanmar's military authorities of their obligations under international law to ensure the safety and protection of civilians and called for those responsible "for this heinous act" to be held accountable.

He reiterated the U.N.'s

condemnation of violence by Myanmar's security forces and stressed that this demands a unified international response. As of Dec. 8, he said, "security forces have killed more than 1,300 unarmed individuals, including more than 75 children, through their use of lethal force or while in their custody since the military takeover on Feb. 1."

The alleged killing in Done

Taw was sharply decried by Myanmar's underground National Unity Government, which has established itself as the country's alternative administrative body in place of the military-installed government.

"On the 7th of December in Sagaing region, sickening scenes reminiscent of the Islamic State terrorist group bore witness to the the military's escalation of their acts of terror," the organization's spokesperson, Dr. Sasa, said in a statement.

"The sheer brutality, savagery, and cruelty of these acts shows a new depth of depravity, and proves that, despite the pretense of the relative détente seen over the last few months, the junta never had any intention of deescalating their campaign of violence," said Sasa, who uses one name.

The allegations follow Monday's conviction of Suu Kyi on charges of incitement and violating coronavirus restrictions and sentencing to four years in prison, which was quickly cut in half. The court's action was widely criticized as a further effort by the country's military rulers to roll back the democratic gains of recent years.

## Canada joins US and allies in Beijing Olympics boycott

**TORONTO** (AP)—Canada will join the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia in a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics over human rights concerns, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Wednesday.

The announcement came after the White House, the Australian government and the UK government confirmed diplomatic boycotts of the Winter Games in February to protest Chinese human rights abuses. China has vowed to react with "firm countermeasures."

Trudeau said his government has been talks with allies about it in recent months. "We are extremely concerned by the repeated human rights violations by the Chinese government," Trudeau said.

"They should not be surprised we will not be sending any diplomatic representation."

The diplomatic moves by Canada, the U.S., Britain and Australia do not affect their athletes' ability to compete in the games.

Rights groups have called for a full-blown boycott of the Beijing Winter Games, citing Chinese human rights abuses against its Uyghur minority in

the northwest Xinjiang province, which some have called genocide. They also point to Beijing's suppression of democratic protests in Hong Kong and a sweeping crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous territory.

"The Olympics should not be held in a country that commits genocide," Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress, told The Associated Press. "Our position is to stop the Beijing Olympics. However, the IOC is determined to do so. Canada and other democratic countries have fulfilled their minimum obligations by making a diplomatic boycott."

The White House confirmed Monday that it was staging a diplomatic boycott of the upcoming games and Australia followed suit Wednesday, with Prime Minister Scott Morrison saying it was "in Australia's national interest."

Relations between Canada and China have been poor since China arrested two Canadians in China in Dec. 2018, shortly after Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou, Huawei Technologies' chief financial officer and the daughter of the company's founder, on a U.S. extradition request.

## India's military chief, 12 others killed in helicopter crash

**NEW DELHI** (AP)—India's military chief, Gen. Bipin Rawat, and 12 others were killed Wednesday in a helicopter crash in southern Tamil Nadu state, the air force said.

It said in a tweet that the helicopter "met with a tragic accident."

The dead included Rawat's wife. The air force said one officer, Group Capt. Varun Singh, survived and is being treated in a military hospital.

The air force said the Russian-made Mi-17V5 helicopter was on its way from an air force base to the army defense services college when it crashed near the town of Coonoor, a hill station in Tamil Nadu. The reason for the crash was not immediately known.

Television images from the crash site showed plumes

of smoke billowing from the debris as local residents tried to put out the fire and remove bodies from the wreckage.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Rawat had contributed greatly to modernizing the country's armed forces. "His insights and perspectives on strategic matters were exceptional," Modi said.

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh said Rawat "served the country with exceptional courage and diligence."

Archrival Pakistan's army chief, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, expressed his condolences on the "tragic death" of Rawat and his wife, its government said in a tweet. The air force said an inquiry has been ordered into the accident.

Rawat, 63, was the most senior official in the Indian mili-

tary and the first chief of defense staff, a position created by the government in 2019. He was also an adviser to the Defense Ministry.

His primary task was to overhaul the military, which has struggled to modernize and improve coordination among the army, navy and air force.

He previously served as chief of army staff and also commanded forces in Indian-controlled Kashmir and along the frontier with China. He was a veteran of counterinsurgency operations.

In 2015, Rawat oversaw Indian "surgical strikes" into neighboring Myanmar, when para-commandos entered the country to attack Naga rebels who had ambushed and killed Indian troops.

In 2017, he awarded a gal-

lantry medal to an army officer who had tied a civilian to the front of his jeep in Kashmir, where rebels are fighting Indian rule. The incident sparked controversy within India and outside, with rights groups saying the officer used the man as a human shield against stone-throwing protesters. Rawat said the officer's actions were within the rules because the army was facing a "dirty war" in the disputed region and had to fight using "innovative" ways.

Last month, he triggered another controversy by saying on television that Kashmir residents are offering to "lynch terrorists themselves" and that it was a "very positive sign." Lynchings are illegal under Indian law. He did not provide any evidence to support his statement.

## Hong Kong tycoon, two others convicted over Tiananmen vigil

**HONG KONG** (AP)—Hong Kong tycoon and prominent pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai and two others were convicted Thursday for their roles in last year's banned Tiananmen candlelight vigil, amid a crackdown on dissent in the city and Beijing's tightening political control.

Lai, together with Chow Hang-tung, a vice chairperson of the now-defunct vigil organizer the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China,

and activist and former reporter Gwyneth Ho were convicted for either taking part in or inciting others to join the candlelight vigil in 2020.

They are among 24 activists who were charged over their roles in the unauthorized assembly in Victoria Park on June 4 last year, during which thousands of people gathered to light candles and sing songs in the park despite police warnings that



Lai

they may be breaking the law.

The Hong Kong Alliance previously organized a candlelight vigil in the city's Victoria Park on June 4 each year to mark the bloody crackdown on protesters campaigning for more democracy in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Last year, authorities banned the protest for the first time in three decades, citing social distancing restrictions

and public health risks due to the coronavirus. The protest was also banned this year.

Prior to the ban, massive crowds attended the annual candlelight vigil and it was the only large-scale public commemoration on Chinese soil of the 1989 crackdown in Beijing.

Lai was found guilty of inciting others to take part, while Ho was convicted for knowingly participating in the assembly. Chow, a barrister, was convicted for both inciting and participating in the vigil.



# World

## UN says large quantities of food looted in northern Ethiopia

**UNITED NATIONS** (AP)—Large quantities of U.N. food earmarked for malnourished people in northern Ethiopia have been looted from warehouses, reportedly by elements of Tigrayan forces and the local population, the United Nations said Wednesday.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the small-scale theft of food from warehouses in the town of Kombolcha in the Amhara region escalated to mass looting of warehouses across the Kombolcha area in recent days.

In addition, he said three U.N. World Food Program trucks used for humanitarian operations were commandeered by military personnel for their own use on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Dujarric said the exact amount of food that was stolen from the warehouses is still being determined, but it included nutritional items for malnourished children.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since November 2020 when a political falling-out between Tigray forces in the north who long dominated the national government and the current administra-



Villagers leave their homes in the rain, carrying their belongings on donkeys, near the village of Chenna Teklehaymanot, in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia, on Sept. 9, 2021.

tion of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed erupted in fighting.

Tigray forces in recent months have retaken the Tigray region and brought the fighting into the neighboring

Amhara and Afar regions. The government declared a state of emergency in November as Tigray fighters moved closer to Addis Ababa. The U.N. says more than 2 million people are

now displaced overall.

Dujarric said an estimated 9.4 million people across Tigray, Amhara and Afar “are now in critical need of food assistance.”

He later said WFP estimates 5.2 million people in Tigray, 534,000 in Afar and 3.7 million in Amhara are all in urgent need of food assistance,

according to the latest figures.

He said WFP personnel on the ground were unable to prevent the looting of the warehouses “in the face of extreme intimidation, including staff being held at gunpoint.”

As a result, Dujarric said, WFP has suspended food distributions in the towns of Kombolcha and Dessie.

“We strongly condemn all of these incidents and reiterate our calls to all parties to the conflict to respect and protect humanitarian relief personnel and objects, in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law,” he said. “It is prohibited to attack, destroy, misappropriate, or loot relief supplies, installations, materials, units or vehicles.”

Dujarric said the incidents “will further worsen malnutrition and prolong food insecurity in northern Ethiopia.”

He stressed that harassment by armed forces of humanitarian workers who face growing challenges to help hungry people “is unacceptable and undermines the ability of the United Nations and all of our humanitarian partners to deliver assistance when it is most needed.”

## 7 UN peacekeepers killed, 3 critically hurt in central Mali

**UNITED NATIONS** (AP)—Seven U.N. peacekeepers were killed and three critically injured when their vehicle was blasted by an improvised explosive device in central Mali on Wednesday, bringing the death toll of U.N. soldiers in the troubled west African nation to 19 so far this year.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said all the peacekeepers killed and injured were from Togo, and the U.N. peacekeeping department said the seven deaths were the highest number from a malicious act against peacekeepers in Mali this year.

Mali has struggled to contain an Islamic extremist insurgency since 2012. Extremist rebels were forced from power in Mali’s northern cities with the help of a French-led military operation, but they regrouped in the desert and began launching attacks on the Malian army and its allies. Insecurity has worsened with attacks on civilians and U.N. peacekeepers.

In June, Col. Assimi Goita was sworn in as president of a transitional government after carrying out his second coup in nine months. Mali faces increasing isolation from

the international community over the junta’s power grab. Elections are due to be held in February, though there are fears they could be delayed.

Dujarric said the IED detonated in the Bandiagara region, hitting the vehicle carrying peacekeepers from Togo who were part of a U.N. logistics convoy traveling from Douentza to Sere. The U.N. peacekeeping department said the soldiers were traveling in an armored personnel carrier.

The 19 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in Mali this year include eight from Togo,

three from Egypt including one who died Monday from injuries suffered in an attack in northern Mali last month, four from Ivory Coast and four from Chad, the U.N. said.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on Malian authorities “to spare no effort in identifying the perpetrators of this attack so that they can be brought to justice swiftly,” Dujarric said.

He said the U.N. chief sends condolences to the families, government and people of Togo and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured.

## Arrested man is freed, not a suspect in Khashoggi’s murder

**PARIS** (AP)—French authorities announced Wednesday that a man arrested at Paris-Charles De Gaulle Airport for allegedly being linked to the 2018 killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was misidentified. Saudi officials later said he was freed.

The Paris General Prosecutor’s office issued a short statement Wednesday after over 24 hours of checks, saying that the man arrested Tuesday was not the Khalid Aedh al-Otaibi who is wanted under a 2019 Turkish arrest warrant.

“The (arrest) warrant does not apply to him,” the statement said, without elaborating. French media reported that the mix-up was related to the fact that the detained man had an identical name to al-Otaibi.

The Saudi Embassy in Paris said the arrested man was released later Wednesday and boarded a flight to Saudi Arabia. The embassy maintained that it was a case of mistaken identity, saying the man “had nothing to do with the case in question.”

A person named Khalid Aedh Al-Otaibi was one of over a dozen Saudi officials sanctioned by the U.S. Treas-

ury in 2018 over Khashoggi’s killing. He was also mentioned in the declassified U.S. intelligence report that said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had “approved” the operation that killed Khashoggi. The report used an alternate English transliteration of his last name.

Khashoggi was killed after he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul to get documents that would allow him to marry his Turkish fiancée, who was waiting outside. Turkish officials allege Khashoggi, who had written critically about Saudi Arabia’s crown prince for The Washington Post, was killed by a team of Saudi agents and then dismembered with a bone saw.

The Saudi government admitted to the murder under intense international pressure, and held a closed-door trial, though never released the names of the accused.

The short-lived arrest came at a particularly sensitive political moment for all involved.

French President Emmanuel Macron had just made a point to visit with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on his recent tour through the Middle East.

## Nigerian leader ‘distressed’ after 23 travelers slain on bus

**LAGOS, Nigeria** (AP)—At least 23 travelers have been killed in northwest Nigeria in an attack by the same armed groups blamed for killing thousands this year in Africa’s most populous country.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said he is “very distressed” over the attack that occurred Monday though details of the incident emerged only on Wednesday. It is the latest in a cycle of violence targeting rural communities and travelers along highways in the northwest and central parts

of the West African nation.

Sokoto state governor Aminu Tambuwal said that the gunmen opened fire at a bus conveying the travelers along a route notorious for such attacks in the Isa area of the state. Twenty-three of the travelers died of fire burns while six others were injured, he said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack but blame quickly fell on assailants who have killed at least 2,500 people in the northwest and central states in the first half of 2021, according to

data from the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations.

Buhari—who was elected in 2015 after promising to crush Islamist extremists in the northeast—has seen the armed violence in other parts of northern Nigeria grow rapidly under his watch. He faces mounting pressure to act. On Wednesday, he said the latest attack “shows that the evil this administration is confronting is one that requires the support and involvement of all Nigerians.”

“I extend deep condolences to the families of the victims

as I assure that the security agencies will continue to give their all to bring to an end the operations of these despicable people,” Buhari said.

The armed groups often target communities where they outnumber and outgun security operatives. They mostly consist of young men from the Fulani ethnic group, who had traditionally worked as nomadic cattle herders but are caught up in a decades-long conflict with Hausa farming communities over access to water and grazing land.







# Science & Technology

## Panel: Consider tinkering with oceans to suck up more carbon

The United States should research how to tinker with the oceans—even zapping them with electricity—to get them to suck more carbon dioxide out of the air to fight climate change, the National Academy of Sciences recommends.

The panel outlines six ways that could help oceans remove more heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The scientists said the most promising possibilities include making the seas less acidic with minerals or jolts of electricity, adding phosphorous or nitrogen to spur plankton growth and creating massive seaweed farms.

But it's unknown if they would work, would cost too much or cause more harm than good. So the panel of science advisers to the federal government Wednesday proposed spending more than \$1 billion over the next decade to figure out the potential pitfalls and most effective methods of getting the world's oceans to suck up more carbon.

The issue needs to be examined, the academy said, because something more than reducing carbon emissions likely needs to be done to take heat-



A man wades into the ocean at sunset, Tuesday, June 22, 2021, in Newport Beach, Calif.

AP

trapping gases out of the air if the world is to meet the 2015 Paris climate goals of limiting future warming to a few more tenths of a degree from now. By mid-century, the world will probably need to take about 10 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide out of the air annually, the report said.

Previous academy reports looked at geoengineering as well as efforts to take in car-

bon, including planting more trees. This new report, funded by the non-profit Climate-Works, examines what's now absorbing most of excess carbon dioxide: the seas.

The report doesn't advocate geoengineering the oceans, just exploring how it could be done.

"We don't answer the question, 'Should we?'" said panel chairman Scott Doney, a biogeochemist at the University

of Virginia. "The question is, 'Can we?' And if we do, what would be the impacts, and one of the things we try to highlight is that all of these approaches will have impacts."

"What are the consequences to the environment?" Doney said.

The report looked at the following ways for oceans to take more carbon dioxide from the air:

■ Electrical jolting the oceans to make them less acidic. Water that's more alkaline can suck up more carbon. It also helps fight one of climate change's harms—acidic ocean waters that damage shellfish and reefs. Scientists are confident the approach would work because it is basic chemistry, Doney said. But it bears the highest cost and medium to high risks. The report

recommends \$350 million in research.

■ Using minerals to make the ocean to make it less acidic. This would be somewhat expensive and risky, and the report recommends \$125 million to \$200 million for research.

■ Adding nutrients such as phosphorus or nitrogen to the ocean surface. This would spur photosynthesis by plankton, which would breathe in the carbon dioxide then sink. The panel had medium to high confidence that it would work, with medium environmental risks, and recommended \$290 million in research and field experiments.

■ Seaweed farming with the plants taking up carbon then sinking into the deep ocean or getting pumped there. There's medium confidence this would work with medium to high environmental risks. The panel suggests \$130 million in research.

■ Ecosystem recovery would help marine animals, plants and the coastal environment become healthier and absorb more carbon. It has low environmental risk but also low to medium chances of working. The report estimates \$220 million in research.

## Study can't confirm lab results for many cancer experiments

Eight years ago, a team of researchers launched a project to carefully repeat early but influential lab experiments in cancer research.

They recreated 50 experiments, the type of preliminary research with mice and test tubes that sets the stage for new cancer drugs. The results reported Tuesday: About half the scientific claims didn't hold up.

"The truth is we fool ourselves. Most of what we claim is novel or significant is no such thing," said Dr. Vinay Prasad, a cancer doctor and researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, who was not involved in the project.

It's a pillar of science that the strongest findings come from experiments that can be repeated with similar results.

In reality, there's little incentive for researchers to share methods and data so others can verify the work, said Marcia McNutt, president of the National Academy of Sciences. Researchers lose prestige if their results don't hold up to scrutiny, she said.

And there are built-in rewards for publishing discoveries.

But for cancer patients, it can raise false hopes to read headlines of a mouse study that seems to promise a cure "just around the corner," Prasad said. "Progress in cancer is al-

ways slower than we hope."

The new study reflects on shortcomings early in the scientific process, not with established treatments. By the time cancer drugs reach the market, they've been tested rigorously in large numbers of people to make sure they are safe and they work.

For the project, the researchers tried to repeat experiments from cancer biology papers published from 2010 to 2012 in major journals such as Cell, Science and Nature.

Overall, 54% of the original findings failed to measure up to statistical criteria set ahead of time by the Reproducibility Project, according to the team's study published online Tuesday by eLife. The nonprofit eLife receives funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press Health and Science Department.

Among the studies that did not hold up was one that found a certain gut bacteria was tied to colon cancer in humans. Another was for a type of drug that shrunk breast tumors in mice. A third was a mouse study of a potential prostate cancer drug.

A co-author of the prostate cancer study said the research done at Sanford Burnham Prebys research institute has held up to other scrutiny.

"There's plenty of reproduction in the (scientific) literature of our results," said Erkki Ruoslahti, who started a company now running human trials on the same compound for metastatic pancreatic cancer.

This is the second major analysis by the Reproducibility Project. In 2015, they found similar problems when they tried to repeat experiments in psychology.

Study co-author Brian Nosek of the Center for Open Science said it can be wasteful to plow ahead without first doing the work to repeat findings.

"We start a clinical trial, or we spin up a startup company, or we trumpet to the world 'We have a solution,' before we've done the follow-on work to verify it," Nosek said.

The researchers tried to minimize differences in how the cancer experiments were conducted. Often, they couldn't get help from the scientists who did the original work when they had questions about which strain of mice to use or where to find specially engineered tumor cells.

"I wasn't surprised, but it is concerning that about a third of scientists were not helpful, and, in some cases, were beyond not helpful," said Michael Lauer, deputy director of extramural research at the National Institutes of Health. (AP)

### Science Matters

## Why she tilts her head when you speak to her

*Human or other animal behavior that tends to one side or the other often stems from some asymmetry in the nervous system — such as the brain's having two hemispheres.*

*Because no research has been carried out on dogs' familiar head-tilting behavior, Hungarian scientists conducted a controlled experiment on why they do it.*

### A test for clever dogs

Some dogs ("gifted learners") very often tilted their head upon hearing the owner's naming and asking for a toy

**7 'Gifted learner' dogs**

**33 'Typical' dogs**

Typical dogs rarely learn that behavior

**An individual trait: some go left, some go right**

**MAX tilts right**

**WHISKY tilts left**

**GAIA tilts left**

### What made the dog tilt its head

Among the gifted dogs, the human naming a toy that the dog was trained to recognize would make the dog tilt its head

If the human spoke nonsense words, the gifted dog *did not* tilt its head as it processed the sound

Source: Andrea Sommes of Family Dog Project, Eotvös Loránd University (Budapest); Animal Cognition (journal)  
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service © 2021 TNS

**These gifted dogs** were collie-types — herding breeds well-known for verbal intelligence



## Life & Style

# Giant Christmas tree outside Fox News headquarters set afire

**NEW YORK (AP)**—A man was charged with arson and other crimes Wednesday for setting fire to a 50-foot (15-meter) Christmas tree in front of Fox News headquarters in midtown Manhattan, police said.

The artificial tree outside of the News Corp. building that houses Fox News, The Wall Street Journal and the New York Post caught fire shortly after midnight, police said.

Photos and videos from the scene show the fully decorated tree going up in flames.

Fox News host Shannon Bream announced the fire to viewers as firefighters were working to put it out.

"This is the Fox Square

in New York, outside of Fox headquarters," Bream said. "It appears that our giant Christmas tree there, just a couple of minutes ago, was completely engulfed in flames."

Firefighters extinguished the flames, and no injuries were reported.

A 49-year-old man who police said was homeless was arrested on charges including criminal mischief, arson and trespassing. It wasn't clear if he had an attorney who could comment on the charges.

Police said the man had a lighter, but it was unclear whether any accelerant was used.

The tree had been ceremonially lit during a network



Christmas special on Sunday. Its charred remains were being dismantled Wednesday.

"We will not let this deliberate and brazen act of cowardice deter us," FOX News Media CEO Suzanne Scott told network staffers in a memo. Scott said a new tree would be installed "as a message that there can be peace, light and joy even during a dark moment like this."

A lighting ceremony will be held for the new tree, Scott said.

A worker disassembles a Christmas tree outside Fox News headquarters, in New York, Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021. AP

## Smollett awaits verdict as jurors consider case

**CHICAGO (AP)**—Jurors in Jussie Smollett's trial are expected to resume deliberations Thursday on charges the former "Empire" actor orchestrated a fake attack on himself, then lied to Chicago police about being the victim of an anti-gay, racist hate crime.

The jury deliberated for about two hours on Wednesday following a roughly one-week trial. They asked Judge James Linn for a copy of a calendar prosecutors displayed at trial that indicated relevant dates, including that of the alleged attack and of what two brothers testified was a "dry run" for the Jan. 29, 2019, assault.

In closing arguments earlier Wednesday, a prosecutor told jurors there is "overwhelming evidence" that Smollett staged the attack, then lied to police about it for publicity. His de-

fense attorney said prosecutors' case was based on lies.

Two brothers testified last week that Smollett recruited them to fake the attack near his home in downtown Chicago. They said Smollett, who is Black and gay, told them to put a noose around his neck, yell racist and homophobic slurs, and rough him up in view of a surveillance camera.

Smollett testified that he was the victim of a real hate crime, telling jurors "there was no hoax." He called the brothers "liars" and said the \$3,500 check he wrote them was for meal and workout plans. His attorneys argued that the brothers attacked the actor because they are homophobic and that they made up the story about the attack being staged but said they wouldn't testify against Smollett if he paid them each \$1 million.

## Board rules Astroworld lawsuits to be handled by one judge

**HOUSTON (AP)**—The more than 300 lawsuits that have been filed so far in Houston following a massive crowd surge at the Astroworld festival that left 10 people dead have been consolidated and will be handled by one judge as the cases proceed through the court system, a judicial board ruled.

In an order issued on Tuesday, the Board of Judges of

the Civil Trial Division of the Harris County District Courts in Houston granted a request by attorney Brent Coon to have all pretrial matters in the various lawsuits be handled by one judge. If any of the lawsuits go to trial, the case would return to its original court.

"This consolidation will promote the expeditious and efficient administration of jus-

tice," the two-page order said.

All pretrial motions and issues in the lawsuits will be heard by state District Judge Kristen Hawkins.

Those who have been sued include rap superstar Travis Scott, who created the festival and was the headliner, concert promoter Live Nation and other companies connected to the event.

The 10 people who died

were among 50,000 who had attended the festival and were in the audience on Nov. 5 when Scott's concert turned deadly as fans surged toward the stage during his set.

The youngest victim was 9-year-old Ezra Blount. The others who died ranged in age from 14 to 27. Some 300 people were injured and treated at the festival site and 25 were taken to hospitals.

## 'Jeopardy!' stays with hosts Bialik, Jennings for the season

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Mayim Bialik and Ken Jennings will continue as tag-team hosts of "Jeopardy!" through the rest of this season.

"We're so pleased to have such an excellent and experienced team in front of and behind the camera as we head into 2022!" producer Sony Pictures Television said Wednesday. Michael Davies will remain the

show's executive producer, Sony said.

Last September, Bialik and Jennings were announced as interim hosts after Sony's efforts to replace the late Alex Trebek ran aground. Mike Richards, who'd been the



Jennings



Bialik

show's executive producer, got the host job and then lost it—and soon after, his producing role—when his past questionable

podcast comments resurfaced.

Jennings, the record-holder for longest "Jeopardy!" win-

ning streak, is a consulting producer on the show. Bialik has already been chosen to host "Jeopardy!" prime-time and spinoff series, including a new college championship.

"Jeopardy!" used a series of guest hosts, including Richards, for shows filmed after Trebek's death. The beloved host died in November 2020 of cancer.

## Love interest raises eyebrow at man's shifts in behavior

**DEAR ABBY:** A few months ago, I started dating a widower. He is a really great guy, and he seems perfect for me. I'm divorced, and my adult children live in other states. We have many shared interests and have a lot of fun together.

I noticed early on that he is very emotional, but occasionally, he seems to have manic episodes where he works himself nearly to death, doesn't eat or sleep much and then abruptly leaves. When we talk afterward, he picks on me for really trivial—or untrue—things. I know bipolar disorder isn't simple to diagnose, and I don't think this issue has ever come up with him. I just wonder if this relationship has a chance.

His first marriage ended in divorce, and his children want nothing to do with him. Evidently, his second marriage was good, but she died last year. His youngest son is in college. My self-esteem isn't tied to this. I enjoy his company 95% of the time, and I think I love him. I don't plan to ever remarry and neither does he. I don't think he is dangerous, but I am a no-drama type, so I'm wondering if I should let him go, even though it would be hard to do.

SEEING SIGNS IN MICHIGAN

**DEAR SEEING SIGNS:** If what you have written is accurate, you have seen this man only during his "highs"—but not during his lows. Because bipolar illness can be

treated, IF the person is willing to admit they "may" have a problem, it would be wise to discuss this with him when he's in a normal phase and suggest that he be screened. If he refuses, then might be the time to rationally (rather than emotionally) decide whether to let him go.

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I have two beautiful daughters from a previous marriage. My ex and I get along well (better as friends than partners) and do things as often as possible with the girls, which includes travel. We usually take one to two trips a year. The girls love it, and so do we.

I am now remarried. My wife has a hard time with the traveling, and we have had many fights about it. She would like both families to travel together, but my girls don't want that. My ex's mom has just booked a trip to Hawaii and is willing to pay for me to go. My wife said absolutely not because Hawaii is such a paradise.

I'm torn because these trips are the only real quality time I have with the girls. There is absolutely nothing going on between my ex and me. The girls would rather travel with their mom than anyone else. What should I do?

PACKED AND READY

**DEAR PACKED:** How long have you been remarried? And how old are your girls? Although they may enjoy the

### DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



**fantasy of their parents being a happy family, that is all it is—a fantasy.**

**It's wonderful that you and your ex-wife enjoy an amicable relationship, but the time has come for you to stand up for the woman to whom you are presently married. She should have been welcomed on those trips right after the two of you made it official, and you should have made that clear. I don't blame your wife for being upset at this point. I would be, too. You should encourage your wife to come, too—and devote some time to being with her.**

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



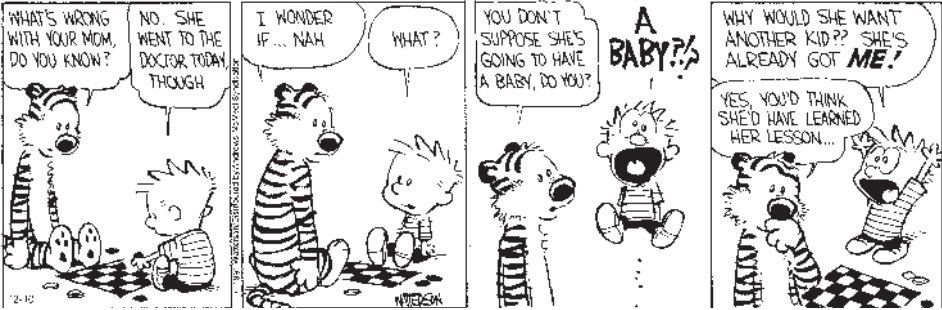
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

45 Trait carriers

1 — alai

4 Pair

7 Audition CDs

12 Coffee vessel

13 "You've got mail" co.

14 Bay State sch.

15 Not "dis"

16 Travel by car

18 Football filler

19 Aleve alternative

20 Sty chow

22 Sushi fish

23 Synagogue

27 Young fellow

29 Fall flowers

31 "Woe is me!"

34 Dull

35 Protein-rich grain

37 Extended lunch?

38 Pvt.'s superiors

39 Cistern

41 Herring's kin

DOWN

1 Traitor

2 Thin

3 Preamble

4 "There!"

5 Phrased

6 Martini garnish

7 Hamilton-Burr

8 Moody

9 Dallas cager, for short

10 Sugary suffix

11 Old map letters

17 Home improvement pro

21 Blueprints

23 Attempts

24 With it, once

25 Swiss canton

26 Leary's drug

28 Commotion

30 "Law & Order: —"

31 Mensa stats

32 Coffee holder

33 "Get comfy"

36 Declare

37 Wonder or Nicks

40 Ouzo flavor

42 Well-built, in slang

43 Ed of "Elf"

44 Sunrises

45 Aussie greeting

46 Caulerize

48 Globe

49 Geese formation

50 Tolkien creature

51 ACLU issues

Solution time: 25 mins.

F	A	R	T	R	E	E	C	O	R	K
U	N	O	R	I	A	N	U	P	I	N
R	O	W	D	I	E	S	T	L	I	T
R	J	B	T	R	A	P	E	Z	E	
G	E	O	D	E	S	F	E	R		
A	R	A	S	I	R	F	I	E	D	
P	O	T	S	B	E	D	T	A	S	E
B	O	G	S	C	S	F	O	G	T	A
E	R	C		G	R	A	S	T	S	
W	A	R	P	A	T	H	A	B	C	
R	O	O	T	H	I	G	H	B	R	O
A	N	T	E	E	L	L	A	O	O	H
P	E	E	R		O	O	M	W	O	O

Yesterday's answer 12-10

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Ky-liegh Curran, 16; Raven-Symone, 36; Emmanuelle Chriqui, 46; Kenneth Branagh, 61.

**Happy Birthday:** Express your views, and align yourself with people who contribute to your progress. Refuse to let emotional matters and manipulative people confuse or push you down a questionable path. Show your intelligence by standing up for your beliefs. Explore new possibilities, put your energy where it will do the most to ensure a better life. Your numbers are 3, 14, 21, 27, 30, 36, 45.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Share and learn. How you get along with your peers will make a difference in the outcome. A change due to someone's recommendation will lead to an exciting opportunity. Network and share information, and everyone will benefit. Don't share personal information. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** You can make a move or change, but don't go over your budget. Too much of anything will make you look bad and stand between you and what you want to achieve. Do the work and make a difference. \*\*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Don't get into an emotional funk because someone mistreats you. Rise above any misleadingness you encounter, and show everyone how resilient and capable you are. Communicate honestly and directly, and you'll outmaneuver anyone who gets in your way. \*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Avoid getting involved in gossip or someone's enticing antics to tear you away from your responsibilities. The more energy and effort you put into your obligations, the more satisfying the rewards. A romantic evening will enhance a meaningful relationship. \*\*\*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Put more thought into your financial and contractual matters. Don't be fooled by what others say or do. Don't commit to anything that is risky or on the recommendation of someone trying to take advantage of you. Avoid joint ventures. \*\*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** You'll gravitate toward movers and shakers, but that's no reason to leave out the people who have propped you up and pushed you forward. Mix the old with the new, and build a strong force that will lead to positive change. \*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Be a participant. Don't sit back when you have so much to offer. Let your voice lead the way and your ideas flourish. Act, and you'll command attention. Do what comes naturally, and you'll gain recognition for the contribution you make. \*\*\*

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Look for the real deal; trying to replace something too soon or without enough thought and planning will cause stress and anxiety. Take your time and use your imagination, and you will find the right fit. Personal growth, peace and love are favored. \*\*\*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** An emotional incident will lead to confusion. Don't miss out on an opportunity because you cannot let go of the past. Be open to suggestions, and you will discover a way to move forward

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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without regret. Perseverance will pay off. \*\*

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Choose to light up a room. A positive attitude will put the spotlight on you. Offer your insight, suggestions and affection to others, and the payback will lift your spirits and open doors to something new and exciting. Be a participant. \*\*\*\*

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** If you don't like something, make changes. Be the driving force behind your ideas, and see matters through to the end. Thoughts followed by actions will help you reach your target and have plenty of time left over to celebrate. \*\*\*

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** You're in dreamland. Before starting something new, make sure your ideas are sound. Put everything in place before you start bragging. Personal improvements will have an impact on the way you move forward. Make health and fitness priorities. \*\*\*

**Birthday Baby:** You are persistent, gregarious and big-hearted. You are capricious and hospitable.

☾ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼☼ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼☼ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼☼ Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼☼ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		3					2		
			2		4				
7	8		9			4	6		
9							8		
	1		8			5			
2							7		
5	4		6			3	9		
		3		7					
	7					1			

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	1	6	7	3	9	2	8	4
4	2	9	1	8	5	3	6	7
7	3	8	6	4	2	5	9	1
1	6	3	2	5	4	9	7	8
8	9	5	3	1	7	4	2	6
2	4	7	9	6	8	1	5	3
9	5	1	8	7	3	6	4	2
3	7	2	4	9	6	8	1	5
6	8	4	5	2	1	7	3	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/10

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

COSMETIC INJECTIONS

Solution: 7 letters

D N A R B O T O X F E L I M S  
E T N U R S E L C S U M I O M  
R R S E S H A P E U S S I T O  
M I S P E M U L O V L I P S O  
A A N C O L L A G E N B S U T  
L L I F X R T C A R T N O C H  
T A H A L A T S Y L L C F D T  
N S C C A P L R I A H I T N Y  
E C H I E S A E R I C N N E H  
M I T A D R S S R I I I N L E  
T T U L O E D T X K L L I K A  
A E O P V N M O S C E C L N L  
E N M O A S T R E T C H R I T  
R E L H E L D E E N I F F R H  
T G R O W T H Y D R A T E W S

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Body, Botox, Brand, Chin, Client, Clinic, Collagen, Contract, Crease, Custom, Deal, Dermal, Facial, Fine, Genetics, Gloves, Growth, Hair, Hands, Health, Hydrate, Laser, Lift, Line, Lips, Medical, Mouth, Muscle, Needle, Nurse, Relax, Restore, Scalp, Shape, Skin, Smile, Smooth, Soften, Spa, Sport, Stretch, Temporary, Tissue, Toxin, Treatment, Trial, Volume, Wrinkle

Yesterday's Answer: Personal

Purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 50 through 65 in time for the holidays! Order online at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.



# Martin scores career-high 28 as Heat beat Bucks, 113-104



**MIAMI (AP)**—Caleb Martin scored a career-high 28 points and the Miami Heat beat the Milwaukee Bucks 113-104 on Wednesday night.

Starting for injured Jimmy Butler, Martin shot 9 of 12 from the field, including 6 for 8 on 3-pointers, as the Heat tied a franchise record with 22 3s against the defending NBA champions.

"They put me in the starting lineup because they believe in me," Martin said. "When my opportunity comes, I want to take advantage."

Kyle Lowry had 22 points and 13 assists, and Max Strus scored all 16 of his points in the fourth quarter for Miami, which snapped a three-game home losing streak.

"We don't like to be in the losing column," Martin said. "We were locked in. You could tell we were hungry for a victory."

After 15- and 26-point losses in its previous two home games, Miami outscored Milwaukee 69-53 in the second half. The Heat shot 14 of 26 on 3s in the final two periods, including four each from Lowry and Strus.

Jrue Holiday scored 27 points and Khris Middleton finished with 20 for the Bucks. Two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo had 15 points as Miami limited him to 4-of-13 shooting from the field.

"We have to play harder and close out, too," Antetokounmpo said. "They made some tough (shots), too. They played harder than us and they played better than us."

The Heat took the lead for good with nine straight points in the final 55 seconds of the third. Consecutive 3-pointers from Lowry, and P.J. Tucker's 3 at the buzzer, put Miami ahead 83-77. Tucker finished with 15 points.

Butler, the Heat's leading scorer, aggravated an injury in Monday's loss to Memphis. He had missed the previous four games because of a bruised tailbone.

"We're going to need our full roster to contribute," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "It'll be different guys at different times. We had some different lineups out there clearly."

Miami's reserves outscored Milwaukee's 40-16.

"The second-unit guys really just gave us some inspiring basketball out there," Spoelstra said.

The loss was Milwaukee's second in its last 12 games.

"Those guys stepped up and hit 22 3s as a team," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "They made the plays to win and we'll give them credit."

## Wizards 119, Pistons 116

In Detroit, Kyle Kuzma hit a 3-pointer with 0.6 seconds left

Milwaukee Bucks guard Javonte Smart (6) jumps in front of Miami Heat guard Kyle Lowry (7) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021, in Miami.

AP



in overtime and the Washington Wizards handed the Detroit Pistons their 10th straight loss, 119-116 on Wednesday night.

Kuzma scored 26 points and Bradley Beal added 25 for the Wizards, who blew a 13-point lead in the fourth quarter.

Jeremi Grant scored 28 points for the Pistons, who haven't won since beating Indiana on Nov. 17. The 10-game skid matches Detroit's longest since a 13-game slide from Nov. 15 to Dec. 9, 2014. The Pistons also lost 10 straight from Feb. 24 to March 14, 2015.

Washington led by 13 with 7:14 left, but Frank Jackson's 3-pointer pulled the Pistons within 104-102 with 1:46 to play. Grant later hit two free throws to tie it.

## Warriors 104, Trail Blazers 94

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry scored 22 points and moved within nine 3-pointers of Ray Allen's career record as Golden State held off depleted Portland.

The reigning NBA scoring champion shot 6 of 17 from beyond the arc, missing his initial four 3-point tries before connecting at the 5:55 mark of the first quarter.

Norman Powell scored 26 points but went 1 of 7 from deep, and the Blazers were just 8 for 30 from long range. Star guards Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum sat out because of injuries.

Curry is closing in on Allen's mark of 2,973 regular-season 3s made from 1996-2014.

## Clippers 114, Celtics 111

In Los Angeles, Brandon Boston Jr. had career highs of 27 points and five 3-pointers, sparking the Los Angeles Clippers to a victory over the Boston Celtics in a matchup of

teams barely above .500.

On a night when Paul George was sidelined with a bruised right elbow, Boston electrified his teammates and most of the crowd with a 3-pointer that beat the halftime buzzer. It capped 18 points in 14 minutes for the rookie out of Kentucky.

Marcus Morris added 20 points for the Clippers.

The Celtics were led by Jayson Tatum with 29 points and 10 rebounds. Dennis Schröder added 19 points and eight assists.

## Jazz 136, Timberwolves 104

In Minneapolis, Donovan Mitchell scored 36 points and sharp-shooting Utah beat Minnesota for its fifth straight win.

Mitchell made 14 of 23 shots and Utah connected for 25 3-pointers, two shy of their season high set last Friday against Boston.

Bojan Bogdanovic had 21 points and five rebounds, and Jordan Clarkson scored 18 points—all from deep—off the bench for Utah.

Karl-Anthony Towns led Minnesota with 22 points, while Anthony Edwards scored 18. The Timberwolves have lost four straight.

## Rockets 114, Nets 104

In Houston, Eric Gordon scored 21 points before being ejected in the fourth quarter and Garrison Mathews added 19 as Houston extended its winning streak to seven games with a victory over shorthanded Brooklyn.

The Rockets' streak comes after they dropped their previous 15 games, and it's the first time Houston has won seven straight since winning eight in a row in November 2019.

James Harden had 25 points for the Eastern Conference-leading Nets on a night when

NBA leading scorer Kevin Durant and LaMarcus Aldridge both sat out for rest. It was Harden's second visit to Houston since he was traded in January during his ninth season with the Rockets.

The Rockets led by 17 to start the fourth quarter and the Nets cut the deficit to four before Houston pulled away.

## 76ers 110, Hornets 106

In Charlotte, N.C., Joel Embiid had 32 points, Seth Curry added 23 points and eight assists, and Philadelphia beat Charlotte for the second time in three nights.

Tobias Harris added 18 points in a rematch of a game the 76ers won 127-124 in overtime Monday night on the same court.

Gordon Hayward had a season-high 31 points and seven assists for the Hornets, who played without five rotational players, including last year's NBA Rookie of the Year LaMelo Ball due to NBA health and safety protocols.

Kelly Oubre Jr., who had 35 points in Charlotte's loss Monday night, finished with 22 points and 10 rebounds but finished just 3 of 12 from beyond the arc and missed a free throw that would have made it a one-possession game with 7 seconds left.

## Pacers 122, Knicks 102

In Indianapolis, Chris Duarte scored 23 points, Myles Turner had 22 and Indiana beat New York.

Duarte, a rookie shooting guard, eclipsed his 13.1-point scoring average with 14 in the first quarter, when the Pacers seized control with a 15-2 run. Indiana outscored New York in each of the first three quarters to lead 96-76 and maintained a double-digit lead from midway through the second

quarter until the final buzzer.

Each of the Pacers starters scored in double figures, with Malcolm Brogdon getting 16 points and Caris LeVert 15. Duarte and LeVert each had six assists. Domantas Sabonis had 21 points and 11 rebounds.

RJ Barrett led the Knicks with 19 points. Julius Randle had 18 points and eight rebounds.

## Thunder 110, Raptors 109

In Toronto, Mike Muscala made a go-ahead 3-pointer with nine seconds remaining. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 16 of his 26 points in the third quarter, and Oklahoma City held on late to win its second straight game, rallying from a 13-point deficit to beat injury-depleted Toronto.

Toronto's Justin Champagnie thought he had tipped in Fred VanVleet's missed shot at the buzzer to give the Raptors the win but, after a wild celebration at center court, the referees ruled Champagnie's shot had come too late.

The Thunder, who won Monday at Detroit to snap an eight-game losing streak, overcame a double-digit deficit for the second game in a row. Oklahoma City fought back from 18 down to beat the Pistons.

Luguentz Dort scored 22 points for Oklahoma City.

Gary Trent Jr. scored 24 points, Pascal Siakam had 23 and VanVleet scored 14 of his 19 in the fourth quarter as the Raptors lost for the first time in three games. Toronto is 4-9 at home.

## Cavaliers 115, Bulls 92

In Cleveland, Darius Garland scored 24 points and rookie power forward Evan Mobley had 16 points and nine rebounds to send Cleveland past Chicago.

Garland also had six assists as the Cavaliers won for the

fifth time in seven games, earning their most lopsided home victory of the season. Mobley, the third overall draft pick, shot 8 of 11 from the field and had a season-high five blocked shots and two steals.

Zach LaVine scored 23 points with nine assists for Chicago, which had its four-game win streak snapped. Lonzo Ball added 19 points and Nikola Vucevic had 18 points and 12 rebounds, but shot 8 for 23 from the field.

The Bulls played their second game since leading scorer DeMar DeRozan was placed in the NBA's health and safety protocol for COVID-19. Chicago guards Coby White, Matt Thomas and Javonte Green are sidelined for the same reason.

## Mavericks 104, Grizzlies 96

In Memphis, Tenn., Luka Dončić scored 26 points, Kristaps Porziņģis added 19 and Dallas used a fourth-quarter rally to end a three-game skid.

Reggie Bullock added 15 for the Mavericks, who surpassed 100 points for only the second time in the past six games.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with 26 points, while Dillon Brooks added 15 points before being ejected late in the fourth quarter. Desmond Bane finished with 14 points.

## Nuggets 120, Pelicans 114, OT

In New Orleans, Nikola Jokic scored 11 of his season-high 39 points in overtime to go with his 11 assists and 11 rebounds, and Denver outlasted mistake-prone New Orleans.

Jokic had five points in the final 1:29 of regulation to help the Nuggets erase a five-point deficit.

Jonas Valanciunas had 27 points and 11 rebounds for New Orleans, but the Pelicans committed 25 turnovers that led to 31 Nuggets points.

Valanciunas' tip-in tied it at 105 with 5.2 seconds left in the fourth quarter.

Will Barton scored 20 points for Denver, which bounced back from a loss at Chicago two nights earlier.

## Kings 142, Magic 130

In Sacramento, Calif., De'Aaron Fox scored 33 points, Tyrese Haliburton had a big fourth quarter and Sacramento won its season-best third straight game by beating Orlando.

Fox shot 12 of 18 and made a pair of 3-pointers to help the Kings set a season high for scoring.

Haliburton added 18 points and matched his career high with 11 assists for his third NBA double-double and second this season. The Kings are 5-3 since interim coach Alvin Gentry replaced Luke Walton.

Cole Anthony had 33 points and eight assists for the Magic (5-21), who have lost three straight and 10 of 11.



# Frenzy Part II? What to expect when MLB roster freeze lifts

By JAKE SEINER  
AP BASEBALL WRITER



The ink was hardly dry on Corey Seager's \$325 million, 10-year contract with the Texas Rangers last week when baseball's historically hurried free agency period crashed to a halt.

Hard to imagine anything competing with last Wednesday's spending spree, when teams combined to commit a record \$1.4 billion in the hours before baseball tumbled into its first labor stoppage in 26 years. But when the lockout ends, the frenzy for the game's remaining free agents should be entertaining, too.

There are 141 major league free agents waiting for a freeze on roster transactions to lift once a new collective bargaining agreement is reached. Progress on a CBA isn't expected until at least the weeks before pitchers and catchers are set to report, meaning another mad dash is probably in store for teams trying to fill out their rosters ahead of spring training.

Here's what to look for when the hot stove reignites:

## IN SHORT SUPPLY

This year's free agent class was headlined by a star quintet of shortstops, but three of them signed big-money deals last week—Seager, Marcus Semien (Rangers) and Javier Báez (Tigers).

Carlos Correa and Trevor Story remain, with Andrelton Simmons also available for suitors who might miss out.

Correa, the 2015 AL Rookie of the Year and a two-time All-Star, was considered the top player on the market entering the offseason and is certain to get the biggest deal after the lockout. The 27-year-old batted .279 with 26 homers, 92 RBIs and an .850 OPS for Houston in 2021, perhaps



Houston Astros shortstop Carlos Correa celebrates the end of the fifth inning against the Boston Red Sox in Game 5 of baseball's American League Championship Series on Oct. 20, 2021, in Boston.

AP

shaking some concerns about his durability by playing 148 games—his first time with at least 111 since 2016.

Two targets loom for Correa—Seager's \$325 million deal was the biggest signed this offseason, and Francisco Lindor's \$341 million, 10-year contract with the Mets is the record payday for a shortstop. Correa is looking for a deep-pocketed team ready to make a last-minute splash before spring training. Conveniently, the Yankees top the list of clubs that need a shortstop. General manager Brian Cashman has heaped praise on Correa, saying last month that negative fan reaction tied to the sign-stealing scandal was "not going to enter my calculus" and that Correa was "clearly not afraid."

The 29-year-old Story has played six stellar seasons with the Colorado Rockies and hit .251 with 24 homers and 75 RBIs in 2021, surprisingly remaining in Denver all season instead of being traded to a con-

tender. He could get something similar to Báez's \$140 million, six-year deal with Detroit.

Simmons won the last of his four Gold Gloves in 2018 and batted just .223 with three homers for Minnesota last year.

## BRAVES OR NEW WORLD?

Freddie Freeman remains a free agent despite his apparently tight ties with the World Series champion Braves. The 2020 MVP is coming off another stellar season, hitting .300 with 31 homers, 83 RBIs and an .896 OPS.

Drafted by Atlanta in 2007, the 32-year-old seems like a prime candidate to follow friend and mentor Chipper Jones in being a lifelong Brave. If that doesn't happen, it's not hard to picture nearly every big-market team trying to take a run at the five-time All-Star.

## UNIVERSAL DEMAND?

It's expected—but not certain—that the National

League will adopt the designated hitter as part of the new collective bargaining agreement. Several players stand to benefit by waiting to sign until that change is official.

Nick Castellanos should get the biggest payday of the group. The 29-year-old hit .309 with 34 homers and 100 RBIs for Cincinnati in 2021, but his outfield defense is just OK. Kyle Schwarber, who hit 32 homers for Washington and Boston last year, has a similar profile.

Nelson Cruz struggled after a midseason trade to Tampa Bay last year, but the 41-year-old still hit 32 homers and should get an everyday job. World Series MVP Jorge Soler also remains available.

## IN LIMBO

Justin Verlander has been left in an odd situation after agreeing to a \$25 million, one-year deal with a conditional \$25 million player option to return to Houston. The two-time Cy

Young Award winner agreed to the deal two weeks before the lockout, but the Astros never announced they had finalized his contract. The 38-year-old technically remains on the market, although there hasn't been any indication he won't end up back with Houston.

Righties Nick Martinez and Jordan Lyles are in similar positions. Martinez, coming off a strong season in Japan, was close to an agreement with San Diego but couldn't get it completed before the owners locked out the players Dec. 2.

Lyles, meanwhile, had a deal with Baltimore but was unable to get his physical done in time.

## SEIYA LATER

Japanese outfielder Seiya Suzuki was posted by NPB's Hiroshima Toya Carp on Nov. 22, and his 30-day window to sign with a major league team was paused by the shutdown. He'll have 20 days to find a deal once rosters unfreeze, and agent Joel Wolfe told Japanese media last week that between eight and 15 teams have expressed interest. Another potential obstacle: spring training in Japan starts Feb. 1.

## BEST OF THE REST

Kris Bryant could fit onto nearly any roster because of his versatility—he played more games in the outfield than at third base for the first time this season, including 19 appearances in center. ... LHP Carlos Rodón didn't get a qualifying offer from the White Sox despite finishing fifth in AL Cy Young Award voting in 2021, meaning teams won't sacrifice a draft pick if they sign him. ... LHP Clayton Kershaw also wasn't given a qualifying offer by the Dodgers, although that was more a courtesy to the 33-year-old. He's expected to return to Los Angeles if he plays next year. ... Other names of note: OF Michael Conforto, 1B Anthony Rizzo, RHP Kenley Jansen, OF and NLCS MVP Eddie Rosario.

## Suarez guaranteed \$11M over 2 years in deal with Padres

**SAN DIEGO (AP)**—Right-hander Robert Suarez is guaranteed \$11 million over two seasons in his contract with the San Diego Padres.

Suarez gets a \$1 million signing bonus payable by Jan. 15 as part of the deal announced Wednesday just before the start of Major League Baseball's lockout.

He has a \$5 million salary next season, and the deal includes a \$5 million player option for 2023 with a \$1 million buyout. Suarez must decide on the option by the fifth day after the 2022 World Series. If Suarez declines the option, he would become a free agent.

As part of the deal, the Padres agreed Suarez cannot be assigned to the minor leagues without his consent.

A 30-year-old from Venezuela, Suarez had spent five seasons pitching in Japan and went 7-13 with a 2.81 ERA for Fukuoka (2016-19) and Hanshin (2020-21).

He was 1-1 with a 1.16 ERA and a Japan-high 42 saves in 62 relief appearances last season for the Central

League's Hanshin Tigers, striking out 68 and walking eight in 62 1/3 innings. He was 5-0 with a 1.71 ERA and 23 saves in 2015 for Mexico's Saraperos de Saltillo.

Teams on Wednesday announced contracts for 34 players that totaled \$1,476,230,000, the highest one-day total in MLB history. Among them were six nine-figure deals: Texas infielders Corey Seager (\$325 million) and Marcus Semien (\$175 million), Detroit infielder Javier Báez (\$140 million), New York Mets pitcher Max Scherzer (\$130 million), Toronto right-hander Kevin Gausman (\$110 million) and Minnesota center fielder Byron Buxton (\$100 million).

San Diego reached a \$7 million, two-year deal with right-hander Luis Garcia before the deadline. He gets a \$500,000 signing bonus and salaries of \$3 million next season and \$3.5 million in 2022.

Pitcher Nick Martinez's agreement did not get completed before the lockout.

## Fulmer taken by Dodgers' minor league team from Reds

**NEW YORK (AP)**—The Los Angeles Dodgers' Triple-A team at Oklahoma selected right-hander Carson Fulmer from Cincinnati on Wednesday with the 39th and final pick of the Triple-A phase of Major League Baseball's annual draft of unprotected players.

The major league phase of the Rule 5 draft was postponed because of MLB's lockout of the players' association, which started last week following the expiration of the collective bargaining agreement.

The Triple-A phase involved players left off 38-man Triple-A rosters. Players had to be protected if they signed initially in 2017 or 2018, the year depending on the player's age when he signed and whether he played college baseball.



Cincinnati Reds pitcher Carson Fulmer pitches in the 9th inning of a baseball game against the Pittsburgh Pirates at Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati, Tuesday, April 6, 2021.

AP

A club selecting a player must pay \$24,500 to the former team. The player can be assigned to any level.

Fulmer, 27, has spent parts of six seasons in the major leagues. He had a 6.66 ERA in 20 relief appearances for Cincinnati during the first two months of last season, was assigned outright to Triple-A Louisville on May 24 and finished 1-5 with a 4.61 ERA in two starts and 35 relief appearances for the Bats.

Right-hander Nolan Hoffman was selected by Baltimore from Seattle as the top pick, Pittsburgh took left-hander Zach Matson from Colorado with the second selection and Washington selected second baseman Andrew Young from Arizona with the third.



# TSL Foundation supports Ronald McDonald House of Charities golf tourney

The Tan Siu Lin Foundation has provided over \$11,000 cash and in-kind donation to McDonald's Guam and Saipan in support of the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament.

The donation is part of the TSL Foundation's commitment as diamond sponsor of the golf fundraising tournament. McDonald's

Guam and Saipan owner Marcia Ayuyu received the donation in time for this Saturday's competition that will be held at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

"I would like to thank the Tan Siu Lin Foundation for its unwavering support to different events that benefit the community, including our first Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament. It is through the help of support of generous groups like the TSL Founda-

tion that we are able to hold this event," Ayuyu said.

Marcia and her husband Joe Ayuyu Jr. are hosting the historic golf tournament on Saipan to raise funds for the Ronald McDonald House of Charities, a non-profit group that has helped over 38,000



**Tan Holdings**

**Tan Siu Lin Foundation**

families from the NMI, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, and Hawaii by providing accommodations and meals for families traveling to Honolulu to seek medical treatment for their children. The couple visited Ronald McDonald House of Charities in 2015 and witnessed how families found comfort by staying together in a "home away from home" during one of the most difficult times of their lives. The Ayuyus were also inspired by

the volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House of Charities so since the visit they've made it a mission to do something to help the group's worthy cause.

"On behalf of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, we would like congratulate McDonald's

Guam and Saipan owners and operators Joe Ayuyu Sr. and Marcia for realizing their long-time dream of finding a way to help the Ronald McDonald House fulfill its mission," TSL Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino said.

This weekend's Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament did not only gain support from public and private groups, but as well as individuals, as 141 players from the NMI and Guam have signed up for the tournament.

Players will compete for a chance to win one of the four hole-in-one prizes—a 2021



McDonald's Guam and Saipan owner Marcia Ayuyu, third left, receives the ceremonial check donation for the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament from Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino, second left, recently at the conference room of the JP Center Building in Garapan. Also in the photo are TSL Foundation assistant manager Raymond Zapanta, right, and administrative officer Rina Robles, left.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lexus NX from Atkins Kroll, a 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander SE from Triple J Motors, and \$10,000 cash each from Bank

of Saipan and United Equipment Rental. Also at stake in the competition are \$500 cash prizes for the winners in the

A, B, C, ladies, seniors, and super seniors flights, \$300 for the runners-up, and \$200 for the third placers. (PR)

## SWIMMERS

From Page 24

not gotten to this point," said Tenorio, who got into swimming when he was 5 years old because his godbrother was also swimming.

Shoko said training has been going well and she believes she made improvements especially with her dives.

"I expect myself to get satisfactory times in all my events, meaning getting all personal best times. I am still mentally preparing myself for the big change in environment because it's been a long time since I've swam in an official pool with fast competitors aside from my teammates," said the 14-year-old also from MHS.

She said she's dedicating her trip to the World Championships to the people who have supported her to reach this point in her swimming career.

"I would want to thank our pool so much, my coach, and Ms. Yuko for helping me improve myself in swimming, my swim teammates for keeping me motivated during hard practices, and most especially my parents for continuously supporting me," she said.

Yuko Kimura is the manager and secretary of Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center and the wife of head coach Hiroyuki.

Asaka, for her part, said training hasn't been the easiest the past several weeks because it's quite tough to maintain a good average time.

"I have been working hard for this moment to come and I can't wait to show what I've got. My expectation in Abu Dhabi is to get personal best times for all my events. However, I expect to cut 30 seconds for 50m freestyle in Abu Dhabi. I have high expectations for myself because I believe that anything is possible if we put our minds to it. I am ready to give it the best I have for the swimming championships. I believe that I can achieve personal best times for all my events."

Like her younger sister, the 16-year-old from MHS is dedicating her stint in the World Championships to their family for supporting them from the first time they started swimming.

"They have been our No. 1 supporters and I will make them proud. We wouldn't be here today if it weren't for them. They take time off to drive us to swimming practice almost every day and so we are forever grateful for them. I would also like to thank our pool for allowing us the opportunity to swim in. I appreciate the support for our team. I would also like to thank my coach and his wife, Mrs. Yuko, for training me to swim because I became the swimmer I am today because of her," she said.

Asaka was introduced to swimming when her best friend invited her when she was just 7 years old. She then joined Tsunami Saipan with her sister.

## ROTA

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will be on Rota and Mayor Efraim Atalig is quite excited. He's getting Rota ready in terms of sprucing up the key landmarks and obviously the area that will be facilitating the event, the West Harbor, Roadside, and the Rota Roundhouse," said Babauta.

Another good news is refurbishing of the Rota Roundhouse is finally underway with the selection of a contractor.

"There's actually already a contractor for the repairs needed for the Rota Roundhouse. I was assured it will be renovated and repairs will be done in time for the Mini Games. I believe construction will begin in January and it's expected to be completed by

April. That's good news for us because we want to centralize everything there at the Roundhouse which is the transition area and the main hub for triathlon," said Babauta.

Aside from meeting with Atalig and Lizama, Babauta, Sitchon, and Babauta also inspected the swim and run routes. "We did survey the run and the bike side and any key logistic that we might need," he said.

All three personally tested the 10K run course but Babauta begged off from doing the swim.

"We did the 10K and Manny and Ricky tested the West Harbor and they're quite excited and they said it was really clean, clear, and really calm," he said.

Asked why he didn't join Sitchon and Castro in the swim,

Babauta's witty reply was: "No, this Chamorro don't swim!"

Overall, the team was pretty happy they were able to physically inspect the triathlon route.

"It's good that we did a dry run. We know what's going on and what's going to be needed when the swim is done. It's great that the two TRAC officials did the dry run of the swim. There's actually a certain area in the ramp that we may need brushing up because it's a bit slippery in terms of cutting back up to the bike transition," he said.

Babauta, Sitchon, and Castro also sat down with the managers of Valentino Hotel, Coral Garden Hotel, and Bay View Hotel to see what the island offers in terms of accommodations for the Mini

Games triathletes and officials next year.

"We're very excited to secure the rooms for our athletes next year. We also met with a couple of catering companies. I think commerce on the island is excited as the organizing committee will spend on accommodations, transportation, and food and beverage during the triathlon event of the Mini Games. It will boost economic activity on Rota for sure," added Babauta.

TRAC and Babauta are expected back on Rota next February where they are expected to meet with Atalig's Cabinet members to finalize all the details of the triathlon event and meet the point person of each of the departments that will help facilitate this important sporting event.

## MCDONALD'S

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lip and other deformities. A lot of families out there that are very financially challenged and they'd give up everything to make their children better. I thought it was something that's a worthwhile cause and so throughout the years we've been donating silently sometimes from our own pockets to the Ronald McDonald House. I'm very, very passionate about this thing because I also came from a very poor family," he said.

Ayuyu said the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament is McDonald's Guam and

Saipan stepping up in its commitment to the Ronald McDonald House Charities.

"By investing a little bit of money to this children who have cleft lip who are embarrassed their whole lives, Ronald McDonald House gives these kids an opportunity to live a meaningful life. I'm really thankful to all of you for donating what your companies can donate for this cause," he said.

Closer to home, the McDonald's president and CEO said Ronald McDonald House Charities has benefitted a lot of children from this part of the world for years.

"The thing that also touched my heart about this program is that it benefits not only kids

from Saipan but also kids in Guam and especially in Micronesia. As you know the medical facilities in Micronesia are not up to par. Their medical facilities are short-staffed and not much doctors. Even Guam which is pretty developed lacks doctors with specialties that can deal with these unique medical issues of children," he said, adding that one thing going for the Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii is that it's connected to a team of doctors at the Hawaii Children's Hospital.

Plans are also afoot to install coin cannisters for the Ronald McDonald House Charities at all McDonald's locations on Saipan and Guam, according to Ayuyu.

Aside from thanking his wife, he also extended his gratitude to tournament director Vicente "Ben" Babauta and organizing committee members Das Krishnan and James Nelson for their hard work in putting tomorrow's golf event together.

Established in 1987, the Ronald McDonald House Charities has helped over 38,000 families from the CNMI, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, and Hawaii. It's not directly affiliated with McDonald's Corp. or any of its restaurants and relies heavily on the support of the community to continue delivering services for those in need.





**Martin scores career-high 28 as Heat beat Bucks, 113-104**

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**TSL Foundation supports Ronald McDonald House of Charities golf tourney**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

**24** FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2021

## Swimmers off to World Championships this weekend

By **MARK RABAGO**  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI National Team that will compete in the 2021 FINA World Swimming Championships set from Dec. 16 to 21 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates will leave Saipan this Sunday.

Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Shoko and Asaka Litulumar said they're ready as can be to make their home islands proud in the international competition.

"Training has been good so far since we are working on our dives and our events. I expect to get best times in all my events and hopefully I can break the 100m freestyle and 200m freestyle record. I feel prepared to race because we have been train-



From left, CNMI national swimmers Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and Asaka and Shoko Litulumar pose during a pause in practice at the Aqua Resort Club.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ing but I also feel a little nervous. I am very thankful for my coach, our pool, the swimming federation, and my family for helping me get to this point," said the 16-year-old Marianas High School student.

Suzuki started swimming when he was just 3 years old following the footsteps of his older brother Lennosuke.

Juhn Tenorio said the team's training has been going well and all of the hard work to prepare for the World Championships is done.

"Now we are making small adjustments in our technique and make strategies to the race. I am expecting myself to bring out my best performance at the biggest stage of the world. I am confident in myself that I can achieve my goals and I believe my teammates are as well. I would like to dedicate my races to my teammates and my coach because we have worked hard together every day and our results of the race will represent our work," said the 17-year-old MHS student.

He also thanked the Northern Marianas Swimming Federation for all their help and support in sending them to Abu Dhabi.

"Without them we would have  
**See SWIMMERS on Page 23**



From left, Triathlon Association of the CNMI president Manny Sitchon, Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta, Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig, Rota Municipal Council chair Jonavan Lizama, and TRAC secretary general Ricky Castro after their meeting last week following an ocular inspection of the triathlon site for next year's Mini Games.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Rota mayor excited for Mini Games triathlon

By **MARK RABAGO**  
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Triathlon Association of the CNMI president Manny Sitchon and secretary general Ricky Castro joined Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta during an ocular inspection of Rota last week. The southernmost chain of the

Northern Mariana Islands will host the triathlon event of next year's Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games. During the visit, Babauta and company also made a courtesy call to Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig. Also in attendance during the meeting was Rota Municipal Council chair Jonavan Lizama.

"We gave them the overall update of the Pacific Mini Games. Triathlon  
**See ROTA on Page 23**

## McDonald's Ayuyu very passionate in donating to nonprofit

By **MARK RABAGO**  
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McDonald's Guam and Saipan owner Jose "Joe" Ayuyu and his wife, Marcia, hosted a sponsors appreciation cocktail last Tuesday at their stupendous Papago home last Tuesday.

One by one, the Ayuyus personally thanked the sponsors who donated



RMHC

money and resources

for the fast-food franchise's inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament set for tomorrow at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort. They also bestowed plaques of appreciation to the sponsors for their thoughtful donations in this season of giving.

Ayuyu said when he first toured the McDonald's headquarters in the U.S., one of the things that really stuck in his mind was a visit to the Ronald McDonald House of Charities.

"The House caters to low-income families, specifically to housing children that have very specific and unique health conditions like cleft  
**See MCDONALD'S on Page 23**



McDonald's Guam and Saipan owner Jose "Joe" Ayuyu, right, poses with sponsors and members of the Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament organizing committee during a sponsors appreciation cocktail last Tuesday at their Papago home last Tuesday.

MARK RABAGO